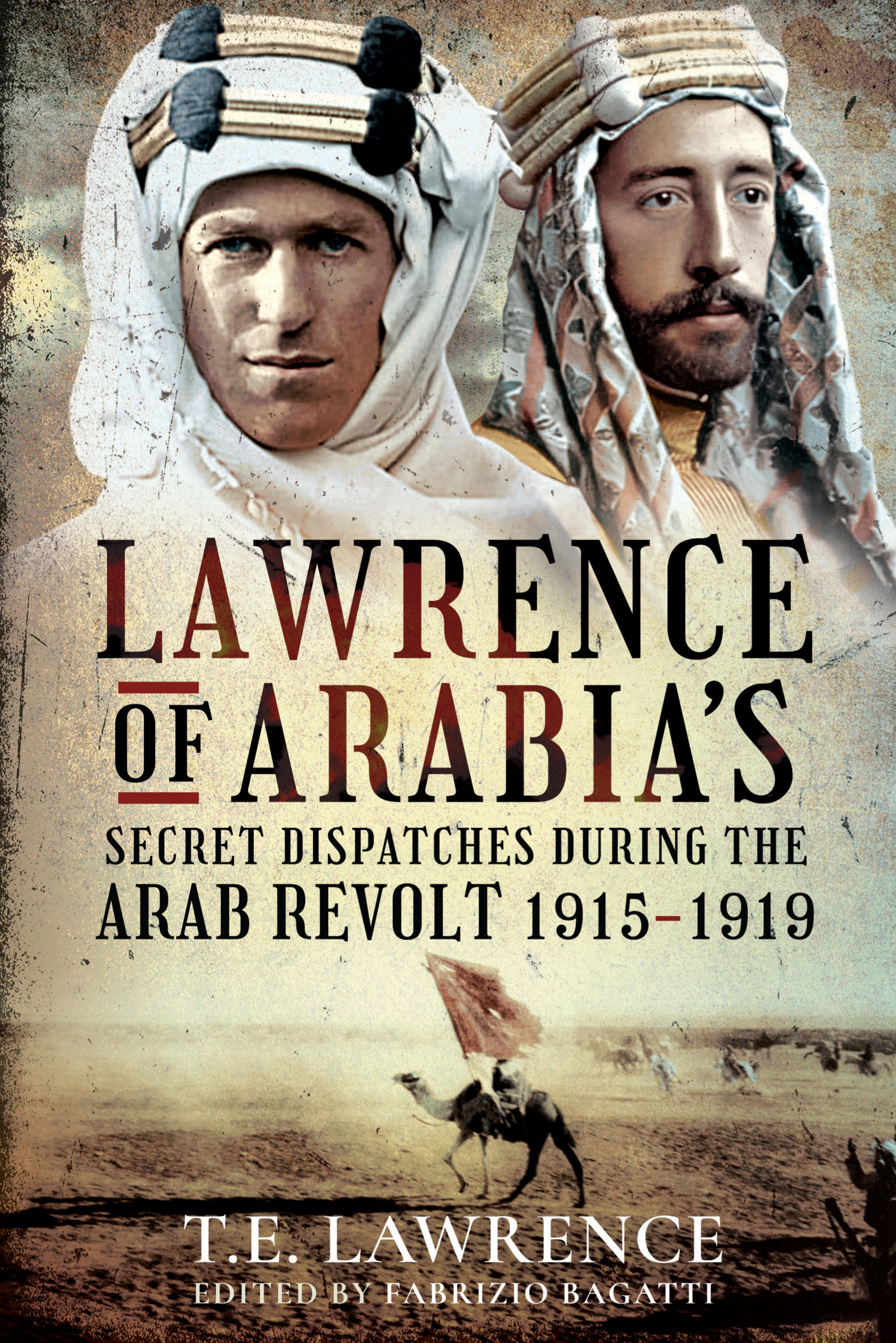

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA'S

SECRET DISPATCHES DURING THE ARAB REVOLT 1915–1919

T.E. LAWRENCE

EDITED BY FABRIZIO BAGATTI

Lawrence of Arabia's Secret Dispatches during the Arab Revolt 1915–1919

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Edited by

Fabrizio Bagatti

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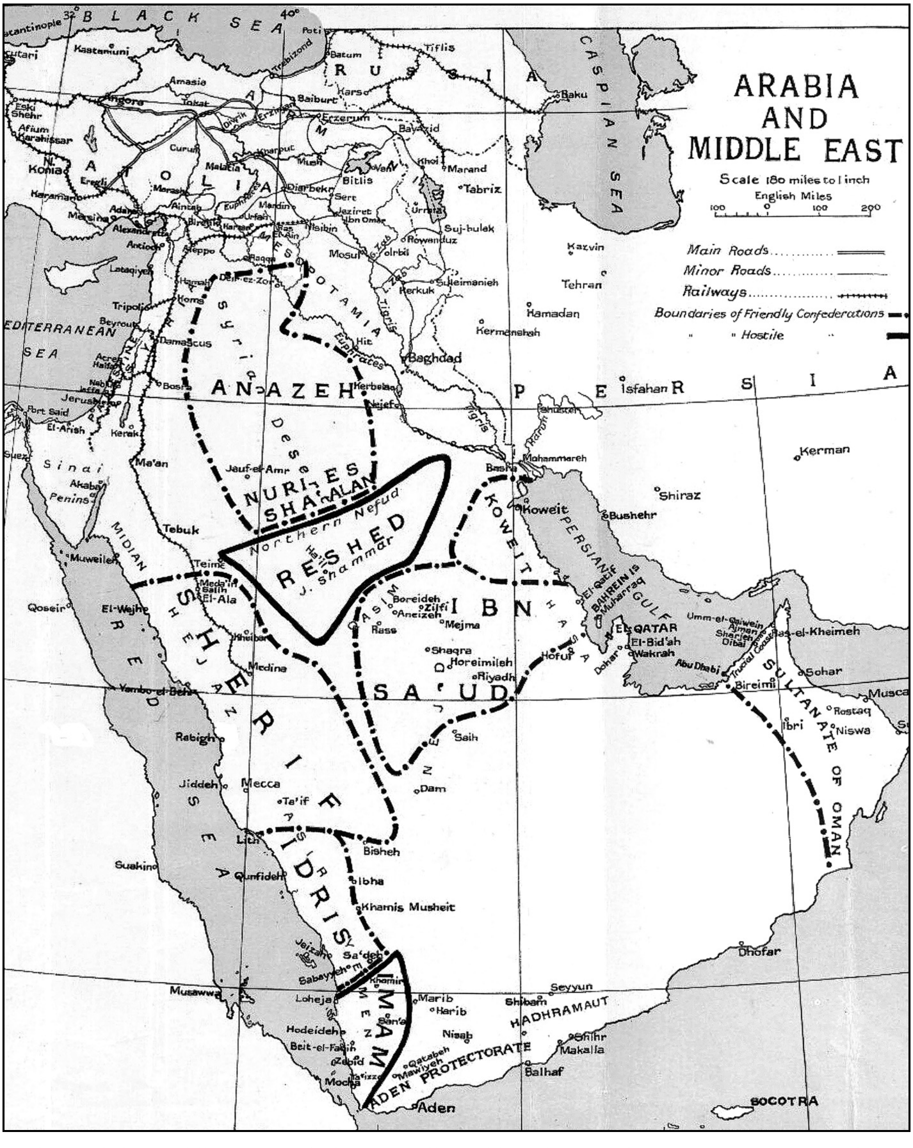
Thanks also go to my beloved Simonetta Bartolini who, for years, has been patiently enduring the desert sand that I keep bringing home.

Although this book contains the most comprehensive transcription of T.E. Lawrence's reports during the Arab revolt that has yet been published, I readily admit that it is far from complete. My research does not end here but will continue by examining archives and collections that have yet to be explored (e.g. the new Hogart's papers recently donated to Magdalen College and currently being catalogued).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RED SEA
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IMAM
YEMEN
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PERSIAN GULF
Euphrates
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Constantinople
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Suj-bulak
Kerkuk
Suleimanieh
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Deir-ez-Zor
Lataqiyeh
Hamah
Homs
Tripoli
Beyrout
Damascus
Acre
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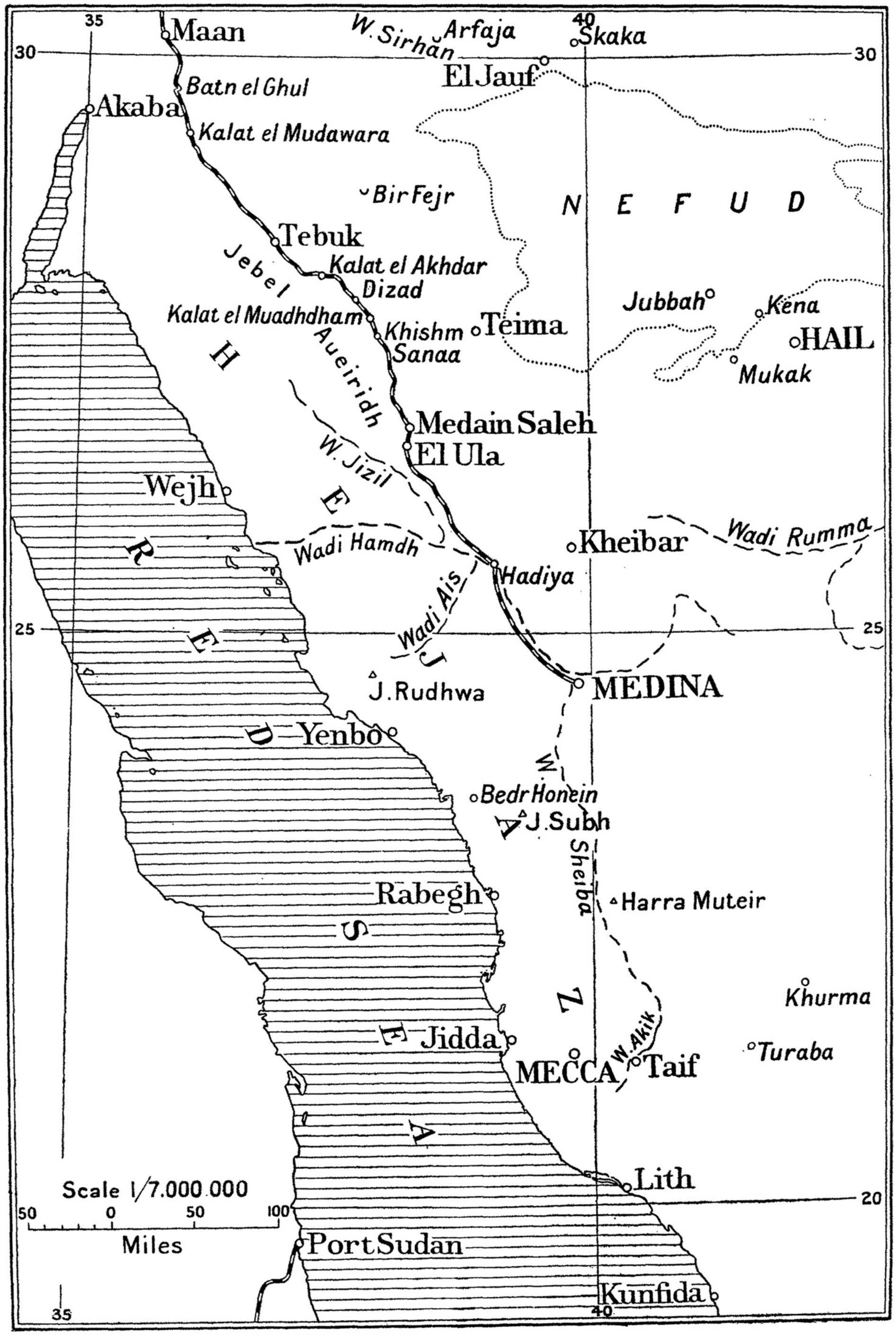
Arabia and the Middle East, including friendly and hostile confederations, 1917, Imperial War Office.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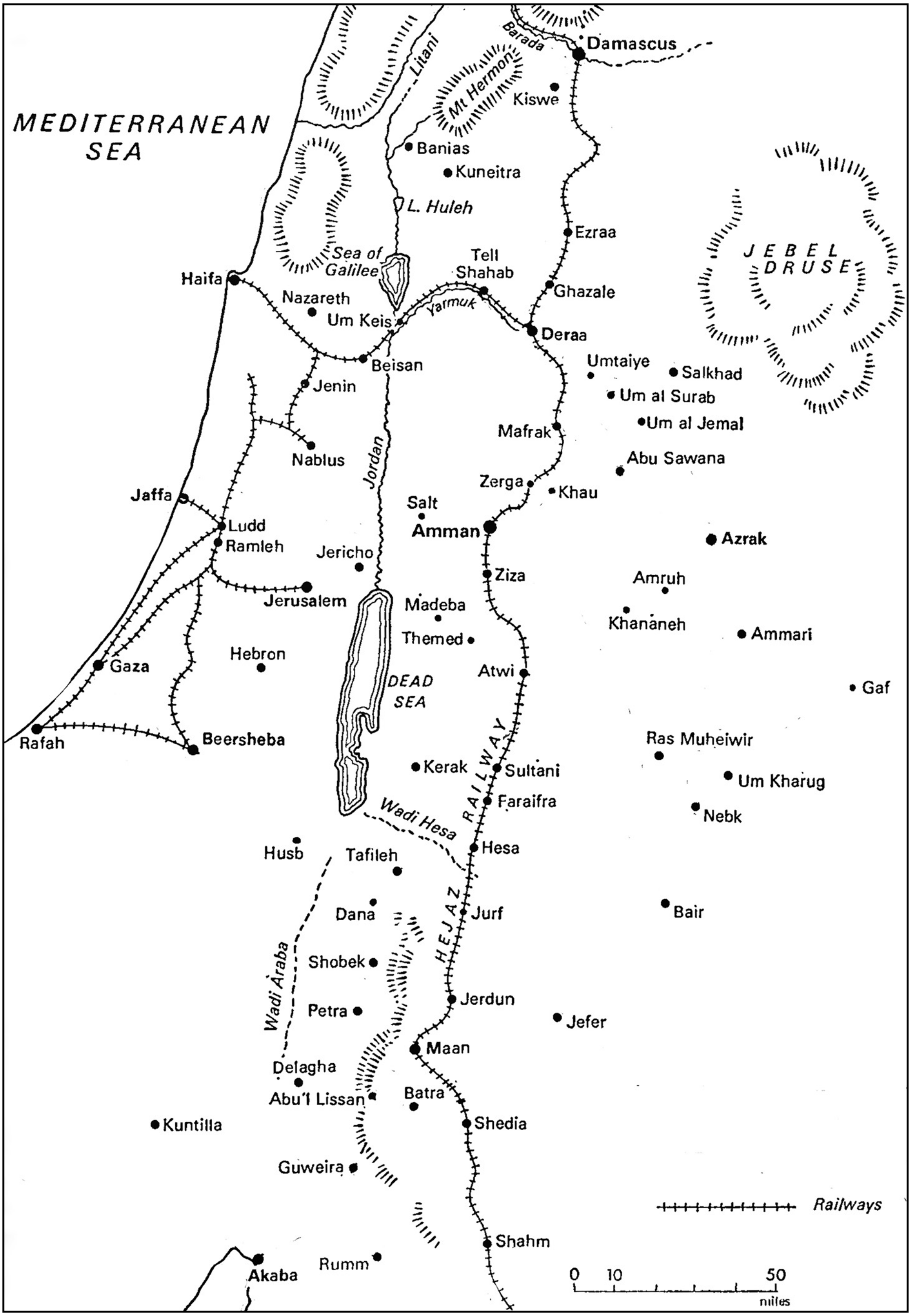
Map of the Hejaz in D.G. Hogarth, ‘Some Recent Arabian Explorations’, *Geographical Review*, 1921.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L. Huleh
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JEBEL DRUSE
Sea of Galilee
Tell Shahab
Haifa
Ghazale
Nazareth
Yarmuk
Um Keis
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Umtaiye
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miles

The Hejaz Railway from Damascus to Shahm.

HISTORICAL TRUTH AND TEXTUAL TRUTH: T.E. LAWRENCE AND THE ARAB REVOLT

BY FABRIZIO BAGATTI

Among all historical sources relating to the military history of the First World War, the reports and dispatches of Thomas Edward Lawrence represent a wealth of material of exceptional importance. Among the various reasons that make the reading of the many unpublished texts I have collected in this volume fundamental, there is the need to clarify the role and importance of Lawrence in the Arab Revolt during the First World War. The myth of 'Lawrence of Arabia', after 1919, had already established itself all over the world. But, after Lowell Thomas's more sensational than scientific biographical work, a very large group of biographers and scholars have engaged in an attempt to debunk Lawrence and even discredit him altogether. As Arnold Toynbee wrote many years ago, 'For a number of years past, "debunking" T.E. Lawrence has been a fashionable literary exercise. By now there is a row of books on this theme.'[1] The confusion created by Lawrence's detractors has ended up generating a controversy that people struggle with even today. Not surprisingly, those who try to attack or discredit him cite Lawrence's reports as little as possible, preferring to casually gloss over them, as if they did not exist.

Yet the truth of the story lies precisely in those (and in these) pages. Lawrence's reports were official documents: they were read with scrupulous attention, evaluated, cross-verified with other sources and, as will be seen, published after a political-diplomatic review process that often excluded entire sections from the printed version. It is precisely from those texts that we should start, because the original texts are the only true source. History is history and the military reports of an officer of the British Empire were and remain very important sources that we should take very seriously.

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[1] A. Toynbee, 'Colonel T.E. Lawrence', in *Acquaintances*, Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 178.

From a more markedly literary point of view, it is easy to realize that in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (or in *Revolt in the Desert*)[1] Lawrence borrows entire pages of his reports and uses them for the solid 'skeleton' of facts – History – into which he grafts the 'flesh' – Literature – of his own reflections.

In September 1939, Lawrence's brother Arnold collected in a limited-edition volume entitled *Secret Dispatches from Arabia* the texts written by Thomas Edward and published in the pages of the *Arab Bulletin*.[2] Except for those select few who had been able to read the original copies of the *Bulletin*, this was the first time that texts of military reports (and related writings) covering the period of the Arab Revolt were circulated. The edition had been authorized by the British Foreign Office which, at that date, still considered both Lawrence's materials and the originals of the *Arab Bulletin* from which they were taken confidential.

For his collection, Arnold had relied on the copies of the *Bulletin* in Lawrence's possession and recovered after his tragic death in May 1935. As Arnold specified in his Preface, to the signed (or initialled) texts of certain attribution, he was able to add a few other articles that Lawrence himself had indicated as his own in copies of the *Bulletin*. Together with them appeared, for the first time, the text *Syrian Cross-Currents*,[3] which was not published in the *Bulletin* but was part of that series of collateral publications that originated from the activity of the Arab Bureau – the intelligence department established in Cairo in 1916 – and was printed for a very limited circulation only among the senior officers of the British Army and key figures in British diplomacy and politics. After the enormous success of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and *Revolt*

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[1] *Seven Pillars of Wisdom. A Triumph* first came out in 1926 in a limited edition for subscribers only (the 'Cranwell' edition, with the imprint: 'text and decorations printed by Manning Pike with the assistance of H.J. Hodgson at 25 Charles Street, London'). A previous draft was printed in proof by Lawrence and forms the 'Oxford Edition' which was only published in England in 2004, 2014^2 (Salisbury, Castle Hill Press) edited by Jeremy and Nicole Wilson. The first 'public' edition came out in 1935 (London, Jonathan Cape). *Revolt in the Desert* (short version of *Seven Pillars*) was released in 1927 (London, Jonathan Cape and New York, G.H. Doran). The history of these editions is so complex that it would require a separate essay.

[2] T.E. Lawrence, *Secret Dispatches from Arabia*, London, Golden Cockerel Press, 1939. The volume contained a foreword by Arnold Lawrence. The circulation was only 1,000 numbered copies, the first 30 of which featured a reproduction of a page from the manuscript of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. In the same year the US edition of the volume (New York, Philip C. Duchesnes) was also released in a limited edition, only for subscribers who pre-ordered. See P. O'Brien, *T.E. Lawrence: A Bibliography*, Boston, GK Hall, 1988, pp. 189–90. I quote from this edition of the bibliography which replicated, with corrections and additions, the English printed edition, Winchester, St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1988.

[3] In this volume as No. 104.

in the Desert, this was the first occasion in which Lawrence's military texts could be examined, so to speak, 'from the inside'; that is, without the filter of a subsequent editing (narrative or otherwise) and their possible re-elaboration.

For a long time, *Secret Dispatches from Arabia* was the only text that could be referred to for historical and documentary research on the sources of the Lawrence of Arabia myth. The slow release of the state secret, in fact, precluded access to any other kind of archive source and, at the same time, the authority of the curatorship guaranteed both the correctness of the edition and its importance. Consider the fact that several years after 1939, the volume was re-published in 1991, edited by Malcolm Brown, who has also enriched it with other writings by Lawrence from newspapers and periodicals.[1]

It therefore seemed that nothing else remained to be done as regards to the 1915–18 period in which Lawrence had been engaged in the exploits which culminated in the defeat of the Turkish army and the conquest of Damascus. However, after the obligatory years of secrecy, archival materials began to be available on a large scale, even if only for scholars. A facsimile reprint of the *Arab Bulletin* was then produced in 1986 (albeit at a prohibitive price)[2] and, meanwhile, numerous First World War historians as well as Lawrence's biographers had been able to consult the original documents preserved by the Foreign Office (now an integral part of The National Archives).[3]

---

[1] T.E. Lawrence, *Secret Dispatches from Arabia and Other Writings*, edited by Malcolm Brown, London, Bellew, 1991. A second reprint of this work was produced in 2005 (London, Greenhill Books) and then an e-book version titled *T.E. Lawrence in War and in Peace. An Anthology of the Military Writings of Lawrence of Arabia*, edited by Malcolm Brown, with a Preface by Michael Clarke, London, Frontline Books, 2015.

[2] *The Arab Bulletin 1916–1919*, edited by Robin Bidwell, 4 vols, Cambridge, Cambridge Archive Editions, 1986.

[3] There are many contributions in this sense that should be mentioned, but here I would like to cite, above all, the fundamental and unmatched biography of Lawrence written by Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia. The Authorized Biography of T.E. Lawrence*, London, Heinemann, 1988, and the very extensive contributions of Lawrence James (*The Golden Warrior. The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990) and Neil Faulkner (*Lawrence of Arabia's War: The British and the Remaking of the Middle East in WWI*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016). On the more markedly military side and with a particular interest in the activity of the British secret services in the theatre of the Anglo-Turkish conflict in Arabia, I ought to mention Bruce Westrate, *The Arab Bureau: British Policy in the Middle East, 1916–1920*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992. I should also mention the accurate (though not as far as Lawrence is concerned) Yigal Sheffy, *British Military Intelligence in the Palestine Campaign 1914–1918*, London & New York, Psychology Press, 1988 which was followed by the studies by Polly A. Mohs, *Military Intelligence and the Arab Revolt: The First Modern Intelligence War*, New York, Routledge, 2008, and by Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: the Great War and the cultural foundations of Britain's covert empire in the Middle East*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008. Without these works it would be very difficult for anyone to navigate a galaxy of documents at least as large as the Arabian desert itself.

The question that then arises is: does the *Arab Bulletin* contain, in print, all of Lawrence's original reports? Are we actually reading what Lawrence wrote in his dispatches? A subsequent thorough verification of the original archive materials relating to the war in Arabia ended up radically changing the scenario.

◆

When, on 15 December 1914, Lawrence arrived in Cairo he was a 26-year-old officer who very few people knew but who was by no means green. Trained in the university environment at Oxford, he soon dedicated himself to historical-archaeological studies and entered the orbit of Leonard Woolley, the most renowned British archaeologist of the time, a top advisor to the prestigious Ashmolean Museum in London and in charge, since 1907, of excavations and research in Nubia and in the Mesopotamian area. While still a student, Lawrence completed a field survey, on a research trip: in the summer of 1909 he travelled, alone and on foot, 1,600km through the heart of the Ottoman Empire, in a vast area that includes northern Mesopotamia and the coasts of Palestine and Lebanon. He learned Turkish and Arabic, albeit superficially as yet, and returned home with a significant wealth of discoveries and ideas. In 1909 Lawrence was therefore already a specialist, before he'd even graduated. Woolley could not fail to notice this, and in 1910 invited the budding young archaeologist to be part of the excavation expedition to Carchemish (on the border between present-day Turkey and Syria) where traces and archaeological treasures of the ancient Hittite world were sought. The excavation campaign had been devised by D.G. Hogarth, the other great British archaeologist, on behalf of the British Museum in London. Lawrence took part with a grant of £100 a year.

But this was not just about archaeology. In these territories of the Ottoman Empire there were also archaeological expeditions from Germany: rubbing shoulders, future enemies shared cultural interests that partly masked the need to gather information or more marked economic interests. The Ottoman Empire had recently built a very long railway which, in essence, connected Mecca with Istanbul; it was built with the help of Germany, but it was Great Britain that partly supplied the fuel for the locomotives. Turkey, Germany and Britain had also reached an agreement in the early years of the twentieth century on the trading of oil from the Mesopotamian area, even before that new resource became a subject of contention in the history of relations between Europe and the Near East.[1]

The 1910 archaeological campaign in Carchemish ended in June 1911, by which time Lawrence had become skilled in handling some Arabic dialects and Turkish. In 1911, in another trip that proved his powers of endurance, Lawrence undertook a second journey on foot (this time of 1,300km) across the territory on the border between present-day Turkey and Syria.[1]

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[1] It must be remembered that, as early as 1905, there were representatives from US oil companies in Cairo who were interested in the resources of the entire Middle East.

The hints of the future war were already perceptible, and the attention of the British moved towards the Suez Canal. In January 1914, Hogarth and Lawrence carried out an excavation campaign in the Negev desert but the nature of that expedition was clear to both of them. In a letter to his family, Lawrence wrote in 1914: 'We are obviously only meant as red herrings, to give an archaeological colour to a political job.'[2] On that occasion, he went as far as Petra and Akaba. As the war drew closer, Hogarth and Lawrence published a detailed study of the Negev[3] which also contained useful information for those who need to find out about the whole area. The First World War broke out in August 1914, when Lawrence was in London. He did not enlist immediately but was already in the orbit, thanks to Woolley and Hogarth, of the British Government's intelligence services: people like the three archaeologists returning from Arabia became immediately valuable. Lawrence also knew how to draw (as a good archaeologist does) and cartography became the first part of his military service.

Perhaps the most 'tangled' point of the whole zone, at the outbreak of the war, was precisely this 'Arabia' that the British perceived to be a weak point of the Ottoman Empire but which they still had no idea how to exploit. Pressured by the conflict and needing to ease pressure on the Suez Canal, Britain planned to hit the Ottoman Empire by attacking from the Mediterranean. In February 1915, the British Empire, with the support of France and the consent of Russia, began the so-called Gallipoli campaign. The effort aimed to occupy the Dardanelles Strait, ensuring control by sea and, at the same time, to establish a foothold on the Ottoman Empire's territory. Operations lasted until January 1916, when the Allies, faced with unexpected resistance by the Turks, had to re-embark, leaving the area after suffering significant losses. Meanwhile, in December 1915, Britain planned to attack from Mesopotamia as well, thus devising a kind of pincer movement to strike the Ottoman Empire from the west and east. The operations in Mesopotamia, which began with the landing at the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris, soon became bogged down in the interior. The British army was bottled up in Kut where the troops, from December 1915 to April 1916, engaged in a desperate resistance until the inevitable surrender.

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1. That second exploratory journey on foot makes up an important diary accompanied by a series of evocative photographs taken by Lawrence himself. See T.E. Lawrence, *Oriental Assembly*, ed. by A. Lawrence, London, Williams & Norgate, 1939.
2. See J. Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, p. 136.
3. See C.L. Woolley and T.E. Lawrence, *The Wilderness of Zin*, London, Palestine Exploration Fund, 1914.

As these events unfolded, the British Foreign Office began to think about the question of Arabia from a different perspective. In agreement with the Ministry of War, it realized that it was necessary to devise a different strategy to attack the Ottoman Empire in its own territory. The Secretary of State for War was then Field Marshal Lord Herbert Kitchener and the Information Service of the Ministry of War also was answerable to him. Kitchener had been a commander in the Sudan and during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa; he had also been Commander-in-Chief in India. It is worth pointing out that in 1874, at the age of 24, Kitchener had explored the so-called Holy Land for cartographic reasons, paid for by the Palestine Exploration Fund itself, which would later subsidize Hogarth and Lawrence. Perhaps he was not a fan of Arabia like the two archaeologists who found themselves in that area many years later, but certainly he was familiar with Arabia and the Arabs. In the first instance, Kitchener reorganized the so-called Egyptian Expeditionary Force and, at the same time, chose an officer who was given the task of working out a strategy for Arabia, entrusting to him the Information Service which was being set up in Egypt. That officer was Gilbert Falkingham Clayton, Director of Intelligence for the British forces from 1914 to 1916 and then Chief Political Officer for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force until the end of the war. In addition to Clayton there was another officer, Mark Sykes, a figure destined to become fundamental, as we will see, in the entire theatre of operations. Kitchener, Clayton and Sykes shared similar ideas about the East. Unfortunately Kitchener and Sykes both died before they could write their historical accounts of the period.[1]

Throughout this time, Lieutenant Lawrence was in Cairo dealing with cartography and intelligence. He was part of a group that also included Hogarth, Kinahan Cornwallis, Herbert Garland, George Ambrose Lloyd, George Stewart Symes, Philip Graves, Gertrude Bell, Aubrey Herbert and William Ormsby-Gore (names that recur throughout the pages of this volume). Also, in December 1915 Sykes began to think that such a group ought to form a special office in charge of countering the Turkish-German propaganda trying to rouse the Arabs in a *jihad* against the Allies.[2] Sykes' project included counter-propaganda activities but also the collection of political and military information throughout the zone, in order to bring the Arabs closer to Great Britain. It may have seemed a logical and simple idea, but it was not so:

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[1] Kitchener died when the cruiser taking him to Russia was sunk in 1916 and Sykes died of the Spanish flu while attending, with Lawrence, the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. See also, Timothy J. Paris, *In Defence of Britain's Middle Eastern Empire: A Life of Sir Gilbert Clayton*, Eastbourne, Sussex Academic Press, 2016.

[2] Sykes initially planned to name the new office the 'Islamic Bureau' and, after its establishment, Lawrence would have liked it to be called the 'Oriental Bureau'. The latter option was strongly opposed by the Government of India.

contrary to what one might expect, the opponents of the initiative were not only the Turks and the Germans. The Government of India didn't want to delegate its activities to others in an area stretching from Mesopotamia to Suez. This was partly because it was concerned that a coalition of the Arab forces would cause upheaval among the Muslims of India. The fear of a *jihad* and the danger of stirring up a hornet's nest in India prevailed over the need to coordinate military efforts. There was also the issue of prestige within the imperial organization. The Government of India regarded affairs in Arabia as their business – why should Cairo have anything to do with them?

While Lawrence collected news and information and drew and corrected his maps, Mark Sykes began a long tug-of-war with India to create a stable organization that was to be called the Arab Bureau. Meetings and debates on the subject began in early December 1915 and ended on 7 January 1916, when the Committee of Imperial Defence published a document sanctioning the birth of the Arab Bureau, to be based in Cairo. The purposes of the Office were clearly indicated: '[...] harmonise British political activity in the Near East [and to] keep the Foreign Office, the India Office, the Committee of Defence, the War Office, the Admiralty, and Government of India simultaneously informed of the general tendency of Germano-Turkish Policy.'[1]

This was the first great opportunity that Lawrence, along with other Cairo officials interested in the fate of Arabia, had been waiting for. In a way, it could be said that Sykes created a pond in which the fish Lawrence could then swim at ease. Once the Arab Bureau was established, Lawrence began to pester the Cartographic Service in order to escape his daily tasks, demonstrating, based on his own direct experience, that no one knew the area as well as he did.[2] Cartography grew to be a suffocating job and he had other and wider horizons in mind: he put forward a barrage of ideas and projects. At that moment the critical issue was Mesopotamia and the agonizing situation of the British army at Kut. Lawrence (with Hogarth) tried to push for a British landing at Alexandretta, on the coast of Lebanon, which seemed more suitable than anywhere else. He wrote to Hogarth on several occasions and, in the meantime, wrote down pages and pages of notes on Syria which would be published only much later but revealed, already in 1915 and January 1916, showing an amazing maturity in political-military analysis.[3]

In the first part of 1915 Lawrence therefore still had the road to Mesopotamia on his mind and focused on that, knowing full well that he was one of the few who knew the whole area thoroughly both historically-politically and geographically. Such qualities did not go unnoticed. In a desperate attempt to break the siege of Kut and free British soldiers from certain captivity, Great Britain decided in April to send, in strict secrecy, three officers to bribe the Turkish commanding general: they were free to spend up to £2 million, a mind-boggling figure (and not just for the time). One of the three officers was Thomas Edward Lawrence, who went to Kut for the strange mission but, at the same time, to test the strength of the secret Arab associations that could trigger a revolt in Syria in the rear of the Ottoman Empire. Regardless, the mission failed: the Turkish commander refused the offer and Great Britain suffered the humiliation of the surrender and imprisonment of tens of thousands of men. Still, the Army acknowledged that Lawrence had performed the tasks assigned to him well. Back in Cairo, Lawrence began to weave his own plot as an informer and continued to write reports and reflections centred on Syria and its eventual conquest.[1] From a tactical point of view his ideas were already very clear and, in essence, represented in a nutshell the future military history of the Arab Revolt:

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[1] The original document is registered as FO882/2 ARB/16/4 in the National Archives of London. See Mohs, *Military Intelligence and the Arab Revolt*, p. 34.

[2] To this regard, see the letters published here as Nos. 3–6.

[3] Lawrence's notes are here as Nos. 2 and 7.

> The only way to rid ourselves of this (hostilities in the Yemen being impossible) is by cutting the Hedjaz line. The soldiers are paid and supplied with arms etc. along this line, and its existence is always a present threat of reinforcements. By cutting it we destroy the Hedjaz civil government which like all Turkish local administrations is excessively centralised: and we resolve the Hedjaz army into its elements: an assembly of peaceful Syrian peasants and incompetent akin officers. The Arab chiefs in the Hedjaz would then make their own hay: and for our pilgrims sake one can only hope, quickly.[2]

Strategically, however, the question remained: who should achieve the tactical objectives? It is already clear from the texts that, in his mind, the idea of a British military intervention in Mesopotamia or elsewhere was beginning to be replaced by that of a revolt of the Arabs that opposed the Turks from within the Ottoman Empire and confronted them on their territory, weapons in hand. What it took, Lawrence began to think, was a general Arab Revolt that spread throughout the Ottoman Empire, and that this revolt should have leaders, means and strategies.

Meanwhile, Sykes, to put a stop to the 'perfect babel of conflicting suggestions and views'[3] afflicting the British commanders, among other things, favoured the birth of what immediately became the 'Bible' of the Information

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[1] As can be seen by reading the unpublished No. 11 of this anthology.

[2] The text of these notes by Lawrence is published here as No. 11, datable to the end of May 1916. The 'pilgrims' are the Islamic ones headed for Mecca and who also came from Egypt and India.

[3] Cf. M. Sykes, in *Arabian Report*, n.s., n. XIII, 11 October 1916, cf. text No. 9, No. 11.

Service in Cairo and of the whole area between Egypt and Syria: the *Arab Bulletin*. Conceived as a reasoned anthology of reports and news (including a section dedicated to enemy propaganda), the *Arab Bulletin* secretly circulated only at the highest levels and in a very limited number of copies. The first issue was published on 6 June 1916 and Lawrence signed it as Director. The 'premise' was lapidary in the indication of the editorial programme: 'Arab Bureau Summaries will deal with any political events in Turkey or elsewhere that affect the Arab movement.'[1]

Lawrence signed only Numbers 1 and 9 as the Director; the task would be carried out by others (Hogarth and Cornwallis above all) until the last issue, published on 30 August 1918.[2] However, it is evident that, of what was published there, Lawrence himself was both the author (signing with his unmistakable initials 'T.E.L.') and an inexhaustible supplier of first-hand news and materials.

We have therefore arrived at the texts written by Lawrence for the *Arab Bulletin*. As indicated in the first issue, this was a printed publication of military reports. This choice was quite innovative: in general, up until that time reports were compiled for obvious reasons of service and circulated within the hierarchy in such a way that the information allowed army cadres to make informed choices. With the publication of the *Arab Bulletin*, for the first time military intelligence reports were transformed into a fortnightly magazine. This would include a careful selection of all the reports and offer edited reading, not so much for 'external' propaganda purposes, but to act as 'internal' information limited only to top level military and diplomatic cadres.

Leaving aside, for the moment, the military question, what is relevant from the point of view of the texts is that the publication took place after editorial work carried out by both Arab Bureau and *Bulletin* management. Reports are rarely published in their original form, word for word; those parts deemed unpublishable for reasons of relevance or expediency are modified. Reports are often summarized in a few lines or condensed into paragraphs that summarize texts of much greater length. Furthermore, the chronological sequence undergoes some significant changes. From the moment of writing to that of the printed publication in the *Arab Bulletin*, considerable periods of time can go by: in part this is due to the objective difficulties of communications, but it also happens because the editorial management may believe that a given report or message is not immediately suitable for publication and, therefore, its printing can be postponed. The most striking example of these 'delays' is precisely the text that is published in this volume as No. 2. Written by Lawrence at the end of February 1915 (as confirmed by the same management of the *Arab Bulletin*), it was only printed in March 1917. Furthermore, it may also happen that a given report or message is not published and remains in the military archive without proof of its existence. Each piece of information must then be verified through cross-comparisons, which extends dates of publication.

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[1] See T.E. Lawrence, in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 1, 6 June 1916, here as No. 14. In Sykes' understanding, the Bulletin was originally intended to be called the *Arab Bureau Summary* (as Lawrence writes here) but almost immediately became the *Arab Bulletin*.

[2] This is the succession of directors of the *Arab Bulletin*: Nos 1 and 9 Captain T.E. Lawrence for the Director of the Arab Bureau; Nos 2–8 Lieutenant Commander D.G. Hogarth as Chief Operating Officer of the Arab Bureau; Nos 10–12 Lieutenant Commander D.G. Hogarth as Director of the Arab Bureau; Nos. 13–16 Lieutenant Commander D.G. Hogarth as Chief Operating Officer of the Arab Bureau; Nos. 17–24 Captain K. Cornwallis, Director of the Arab Bureau; Nos. 25–111 Major K. Cornwallis, Director of the Arab Bureau; No. 112 Major C.A.G. Mackintosh, Assistant Director of the Arab Bureau; Nos. 113 and 114 Captain H. Garland, Assistant Director of the Arab Bureau.

There are therefore two kinds of problems: that of fidelity to the originals and that of the correct timeline. These problems are also accompanied by the research of what, written by Lawrence, has not been published in the pages of the *Arab Bulletin*. Then, another element needs to be added. The publishers of the *Arab Bulletin* produced, in addition to the latter, a series of supplementary issues that focused on topics and themes that needed to be treated separately and more extensively. These issues were not physically incorporated in the *Bulletin* but circulated independently, with a very limited printing and utmost secrecy, in around twenty copies. Here, too, Lawrence had the opportunity to contribute very important writings.[1]

In this edition of Lawrence's reports and various dispatches I have tried, for the first time, to rearrange the material, taking into account all these factors. In 1939, when the edition edited by Arnold Lawrence was published, this work would not have been possible because the confidentiality of the documents meant that the *Arab Bulletin* was the only printed source that could be referred to. Since then, as state secrets have gradually been released, it has become possible to follow the story of T.E. Lawrence's texts along two axes of investigation. The first was the textual one, which required addressing two questions: precisely how many were Lawrence's 'secret dispatches' and how many of them were published at the time? And then: what differences exist between the published texts and their original versions? The second axis is the temporal one: what is the correct chronological location of those writings based on the comparison between the originals and the printed publication?

Using this methodology, Lawrence's entire writings during the First World War take on a completely different aspect from what has been read so far in the various editions of the reports to which I referred at the beginning of this introduction.

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[1] Suffice it to see the texts transcribed here and inserted in Nos. 104 and 112. The first of the two had been included in the 1939 edition edited by Arnold Lawrence but the second had completely escaped him. A copy of No. 112 was put up for auction with a starting price of £37,500, confirming the rarity of those publications.

Still, in terms of methodology, I have included in this anthology the texts by Lawrence of which the originals, preserved by the Foreign Office (which later became part of the materials kept at The National Archives in London), can be consulted. I have avoided inserting the most markedly epistolary material. Lawrence's letters are collected in several exhaustive editions and can easily be referred to in order throw further light on the documents presented here.[1] Some exceptions to this decision were imposed for the purpose of a better understanding of the unfolding of events or because, even in the editions of the letters, omissions had been made that were worth amending. On the other hand, the telegrams, letters and annotations of the wartime period that I have included are different because, with good reason, they are as significant as those that were officially defined as 'reports'. See, for example, the materials directed to Captain Fitzmaurice and the notes dictated to Edward Robinson, hitherto entirely unpublished.

Consulting the materials available at The National Archives, I found that not only some reports or dispatches by Lawrence had never been published in the *Arab Bulletin*, but that the preliminary drafting work had often heavily modified the original versions. The reader will have no difficulty in noticing this. Let's take just one example, short but very significant. In his famous report describing Hussein's family and children, Lawrence talks about Feisal, concluding in this way in the holograph manuscript:

> [. . .] full of dreams and the capacity to realise them, with keen personal insight, and a very efficient.

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[1] For Lawrence's correspondence (a really vast body of material) see *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, edited by David Garnett, London, Jonathan Cape, 1938. See also *Lawrence of Arabia. The Selected Letters*, edited by Malcolm Brown, London, Little Books, 2005 which, in its turn, re-proposed with additions as already published by Brown in *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, London, J.M. Dent, 1988 and *T.E. Lawrence: The Selected Letters*, New York, Norton, 1989. To these letters should be added, at least, T.E. Lawrence, *Letters to His Biographers*, edited by Robert Graves and Basil Liddell Hart, London, Cassell, 1963, and *The Home Letters of T.E. Lawrence and his Brothers*, edited by M.R. Lawrence, London, Blackwell, 1954. It is also essential to point out the enormous work of publishing the letters carried out by Jeremy Wilson on the site www.telstudies.org in which, in addition to the materials available online, it was noted that in prints an edition – *T.E. Lawrence's Works and Correspondence, A scholarly fine-press edition* – destined to collect over 2,000 epistolary materials. Jeremy Wilson's sad and untimely passing probably delayed that publication. The Castle Hill Press in Salisbury has also published: T.E. Lawrence, *Correspondence with Henry Williamson*, 2000; T.E. Lawrence, *Correspondence with Bernard and Charlotte Shaw*, 2009; T.E. Lawrence, *Correspondence with E.M. Forster and F.L. Lucas*, 2010; T.E. Lawrence, *More Correspondence with Writers*, 2013; T.E. Lawrence, *Correspondence with the Political Elite 1922–1935*, 2015; T.E. Lawrence, *Correspondence with Edward and David Garnett*, 2016. All of these letters are edited by Jeremy and Nicole Wilson.

At the time of going to press in the *Bulletin* the conclusion changes to:

> [. . .] full of dreams and the capacity to realise them, with keen personal insight, and a very efficient *man of business* [my italics].

The reason for this addition (missed by almost all commentators) is unclear to us today, but the original demonstrates how Lawrence certainly did not write of Feisal as a 'man of business'! On the topic, report published in this volume as No. 57 ought to be taken in consideration, for Lawrence wrote about Feisal: 'Clever, well-informed, pro-foreign: excitable, proud, ambitious; very pleasant in manner', and 'man of business' about Abd el Kader el Abdu only.

The editorial intervention in the texts appears gradually less intrusive the more Lawrence's military career and his exploits in the field acquire weight and relevance during the course of the war in Arabia. Probably this also responded to a hierarchical evaluation: the texts of a young and unknown second lieutenant or lieutenant were more likely to be edited. The situation changes as Lawrence rises in rank until he reaches that of lieutenant colonel and, in parallel, receives the highest honours assigned to him for the military actions successfully carried out.[1]

But Lawrence was also, if this expression can be used, a writer on loan to the military and it is precisely as an author that I would also like to consider him. Recovering the original versions of his writings is necessary for good philological practice. It is also important for literary history to respect such exceptional writer and in the process to shed fresh light on his complex biography.

As I have partly mentioned, 1916 represents for Lawrence the key moment in his participation in the First World War. From tedious cartographic matters, he moved on to play an increasingly active role in the operations of the military intelligence services. His work in the Arab Bureau acquired greater definition and greater weight. However, as soon as the first issue of the *Bulletin* came out, Mark Sykes began to publish a periodical of his own: the *Arabian Report*. It was nothing more than a further anthology of the texts printed by the Arab Bureau in Cairo to which he added new material on the basis of his personal evaluations and choices. Moreover, Sykes often included information that, apparently, not even the Arab Bureau could have known and that derived from his intense political-diplomatic activity, conducted behind the scenes of the Arab Revolt. The *Arabian Report* comprised two distinct sections: the first was entitled *Appreciation of Attached Arabian Report* and consisted of the reflections and analyses that Sykes was able to make by reading every single issue of the *Bulletin*; the second was entitled *Arabian Report* and contained both anthologized material from the *Bulletin* and, at times, additional documents inserted by Sykes himself. In essence, therefore, the *Arabian Report* duplicated the *Arab Bulletin* and commented on it from a more markedly political and diplomatic point of view.

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[1] T.E. Lawrence was appointed second lieutenant on 5 November 1914 (see *London Gazette*, 17 November 1914, no. 9004). On 20 March 1916 he rose directly to the rank of captain (see *London Gazette*, 18 April 1916, no. 9409). On 5 August 1917 he was appointed major (see *London Gazette*, 5 August 1917, no. 8001) and three days later, on 8 August 1917 he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) for the conquest of Akaba. On 12 March 1918 he was appointed lieutenant colonel (see *London Gazette*, 1 July 1917, no. 7715) and received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) following the Palestine campaign.

What reason was there for such a project, and why did Sykes take up such a burden?[1] The answer is that in 1916 the situation in Arabia had changed radically. In the first place, Britain had come to the painful realization that, with only its own army, it would be difficult to defeat Turkey (as Gallipoli and Kut had shown). Secondly, the search for a way to bring the Arabs as a military force into the war had begun. This was not an easy task, because the Arabs did not have a real army (not one the Allies would have liked) and did not even have a supreme leader to guide them in battle. Until that moment, Turkey had secured the support of the Arabs mainly by buying them off and blackmailing them in various ways: using military threats, for example, or by raising religious issues that identified the Allies as Christians and, therefore, enemies of Islam which Turkey wanted to defend. Furthermore, the Arabs were divided into opposing tribal factions: the Turks took care to 'divide and rule' in order to better control them as a whole. The British were well aware of this situation and had been looking for a way to intervene since 1914. Once the situation was assessed, the figure of Hussein ibn Ali al-Hashimi (1854–1931), who since 1908 had been Sharif and Emir of Mecca and therefore the custodian (by genealogy) of the Holy Places of all Islam, became increasingly important. His religious and political rank made him the most prominent figure in the whole of Arabia even though other Arab leaders opposed him on the basis of territorial claims or dogmatic conflicts. However, Arab intellectuals and politicians who, at home or abroad, supported the cause of Arab independence and the creation of an Arab national state looked towards Hussein.

On 1 November 1914, following previous approach manoeuvres and in the new scenario drawn at the outbreak of the First World War, Kitchener wrote a telegram to Sharif Hussein promising him that '[...] Great Britain will guarantee the independence, rights and privileges of the Sherifate against all external foreign aggression, in particular that of the Ottomans'.[2]

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[1] All *Appreciation of Attached Arabian Report* files are marked in print with the date and the addition of the notation 'night', thus revealing that Sykes at work around the clock.

[2] The original of the telegram is kept in The National Archives in London, record no. FO 141/460-8/303.

The seed was sown, and Hussein hung in the balance for a long time between a possible alliance with the British and a forced submission to the Turks. From July 1915 to 10 March 1916, a substantial correspondence took place between Hussein and Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner for Egypt: after protracted negotiations, it was finally agreed that Great Britain would support the Arabs' requests for independence, if the latter supported the British against the Ottoman Empire. Mark Sykes was present throughout these negotiations and personally designed the official flag of the revolt for Hussein. Allocations of money, arms supplies and logistical support were available. The organization of the borders of a future Arab state would be established after the end of the war. To give substance to all this, Hussein would have to unleash an Arab Revolt that put him in the field against the Turks. The Revolt officially broke out on 10 June 1916. Four days earlier the first issue of the *Arab Bulletin* had been released which explains clearly why Sykes regarded it as so important and took it upon himself to comment on it promptly.

What Hussein did not know in June 1916 was that on 3 January of the same year, just six months earlier, Great Britain had entered into a pact with France (and with the consent of Russia and Italy) to divide the entire zone of the Near East. The pact goes down in history as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, after the two officials who had conducted the negotiations. The Agreement did not include the promise of an independent Arab state. Basically, Mesopotamia was being split in two. The northern part would go to France, which would control Syria and Lebanon; the southern part would go to Great Britain, with access to the Persian Gulf and control of Baghdad. Russia secured a strip of territory to act as a buffer with France in the north; some small territories on the shores and between the islands of the Red Sea went to Italy. Arabia would have its independence limited roughly to the current territory of Saudi Arabia, with the heavy shadow of a British protectorate. This is not the place to anatomize the Sykes-Picot Agreement and its subsequent amendments at the end of the First World War; there is no need to dwell on the details here.[1]

Suffice to note, two important factors concern us here. First, T.E. Lawrence did not know in 1916 of the existence of the Agreement[2] and the outbreak of the Arab Revolt on 10 June presented itself to him as a great opportunity. Now there was a revolt and a leader, at least on the political-religious level. Alexandretta and the plans for landings in Syria were outdated and there was a new strategy which, in essence, would be the one that Lawrence had outlined in May and which has already been described above.

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[1] See on the subject the very recent study by Michael D. Berdine, *Redrawing the Middle East: Sir Mark Sykes, Imperialism and the Sykes-Picot Agreement*, London. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018. I reserve the right to return to this issue in more detail in another volume I am working on. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was publicly revealed on 23 November 1917 by the Soviet government after the Russian Revolution.

[2] There has been much debate on this point but, from reading the reports and *Seven Pillars*, it is clear that Lawrence discovered the Sykes-Picot Agreement only later, after Akaba and before the Palestine campaign. The awareness of 'guiding' the Arabs towards a victory that would have been ephemeral and, at the same time, the certainty of often going beyond the intentions

Another factor was the French involvement which was inconvenient for British and Arabs. On the strength of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the French government requested that a representative of its officers be sent to support Great Britain in its relations with the Arabs. Colonel Brémond was sent; readers of this anthology will soon get to know him. Suffice it to say here that the French wanted the Arab Revolt to be limited in its scope. Allowing the Arabs north to Damascus and Aleppo meant that after the war the French would have to face them in Syria. They approved of the Revolt, but wanted to restrict it to the Hejaz – the west coast of the Arabian peninsula – where the British would deal with Hussein. As the Revolt gained momentum, conquering Akaba first and then Damascus, French involvement became extremely awkward for the British. Lawrence, after meeting Brémond, immediately understood who and what he had to deal with and tried to get rid of him. The unpublished report sent by letter on 8 January 1917 is clear proof of this.[1] Sykes took longer to understand the problem (or perhaps become concerned about it), but when he did, his reaction was damning: 'I find my chief difficulty in improving feeling between Arab and French due to deliberately perverse attitude and policy followed by Colonel Brémond and his staff which is in no way minimised by Monsieur Picot's advent.'[2] In turn, Colonel Wilson, the other great behind-the-scenes architect of the Arab Revolt, would be even clearer, writing in a letter dated 5 March 1917: 'Damn Brémond and his nasty ways. He creates more beastly situations for me than one would have thought possible.'[3]

The role of Sykes in the context of the Arab Revolt is therefore clear and this explains the importance of the *Arabian Report* on which he worked so diligently. Behind the scenes, Sykes was an attentive 'director' and controller of that Revolt. Texts and information on Lawrence derived from the *Arabian Report* which hasn't been published before, even in English-language publications, is presented in this volume for the first time. In particular there is a

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of his superiors, provided that victory did occur, loomed in Lawrence's inner drama. For this reason, upon the conquest of Damascus, he just wanted to return to his homeland, always poisoned by feelings of guilt and by the idea of having failed to realize his dream.

[1] No. 55. Lawrence was then skilled enough to drag the French Captain Rosario Pisani with him; the latter would put dynamite with him under the trains of the Turks until the conquest of Damascus. See, in this regard, No. 95.

[2] See note no. 1 to text no. 24.

[3] See note no. 1, p. 159.

report dated 17 November 1916[1] which, once again, reveals that Lawrence had a broader overview than most of his superiors. In one way or another, therefore, the Revolt began, and thus so began the long military career that would turn Thomas Edward Lawrence into the 'Lawrence of Arabia' who is now such an icon in the history of the twentieth century. After shrewdly outmanoeuvring his superiors, in October 1916 Lawrence broke free from the bureaucratic quagmire of Cairo and was sent to Jeddah.

With that trip and the first meeting with the Arab leaders the legend of Lawrence begins. I will not retrace here all the military stages of the Revolt in which Lawrence took part. This anthology of his reports describes it well and far better than I could. As will be clear, Lawrence's reports can be divided into three main stages on the long road to Damascus. The first was the campaign in the Hejaz. During this first phase of the Revolt, Feisal was identified as the only Arab chief capable of leading it and the tactical difficulties encountered at Medina and in the ports of Rabegh and Weij were resolved. The second phase was the great exploit of the advance towards the North which, once the Arab 'army' was organized, ended with the capture of Akaba and the substantial independence of the Hejaz which pushed the Ottoman Empire away from the Suez Canal. This phase includes the memorable day-to-day travel reports that Lawrence would later use as the basis for his account in *Seven Pillars*. Comparing them with the originals has thrown up many interesting surprises. The third, finally, is the Palestine campaign in which Lawrence and the Arab army of Feisal, flanking the right wing, east of the River Jordan, of the British forces commanded by General Allenby, would destroy the Ottoman Fourth Army and be the first to enter Damascus. At the end of the war and after the conquest of Damascus, Lawrence sent a long report in which he tackled the future of Arabia. From there began the political battle he would undertake to try and obtain the independence of the Arabs at the negotiation tables. But that is another story.

Here again it should be emphasized that Lawrence's reports in this volume are presented in their entirety as they were originally written and they are arranged, whenever possible, according to the chronological order that the publication in the *Arab Bulletin* often had altered.

It is worth considering how all these reports were written. Lawrence wrote down what he was doing in his diary day by day (secretly because it was forbidden to keep a diary for security reasons). From these notes, in the pauses at a stopping place or in the moments of rest between expeditions, he compiled the reports he sent to his superiors. Often he did this by telegraph or radio and, just as often, by means of military post and couriers.[2] In the first case the messages were encrypted, transmitted, decrypted, typed, delivered and stored. In the second, the original (autograph or otherwise) reached his superiors directly and was duly filed. When the decision to print them was taken, the texts were again transcribed, edited and composed for printing in the *Arab Bulletin* (or *Arabian Report*). Hence the often-noted inconsistencies in the English transcription of Arabic names and toponyms, such as Lawrence's habit of writing 'Feisul', a spelling which differs from that used by many of his contemporaries and which is used today. The spelling in English often imitated the pronunciation but this did not ensure the correct transcription of Arabic. The spelling issue is even more complicated where toponyms are concerned because many have changed since Lawrence's time and it is often difficult to identify the original places. One must bear in mind that Lawrence himself ignored the problem – at the end of *Seven Pillars*, he comments: 'Arabic names are spelt anyhow, to prevent my appearing an adherent of one of the existing "systems of transliteration".'[1]

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[1] In this anthology as No. 32.

[2] The British, even in the theatre of war of Arabia, were among the first to experience the 'Wireless Link' derived from the discovery of Guglielmo Marconi.

I have tried, as far as possible, to respect the characteristics of the original texts, not only where handwriting is concerned but also for punctuation and paragraphing. The dates indicated in square brackets are reconstructed on the basis of original documents, cross-comparisons, or the content of the text itself. The veracity of what Lawrence writes in the reports is confirmed by numerous other reports and dispatches which I have inserted in the correct chronological order and in which Lawrence is expressly quoted by others or the words are reported.

To be clear and avoid misconceptions, this anthology does not aspire to definitive completeness. The *mare magnum* of the documents stored in The National Archives in London is such that other possible discoveries by those who continue to study T.E. Lawrence cannot be excluded. Also, here I have mainly examined the former archives of the Foreign Office and materials from other sources will form the body of another collection that I am currently working on.

Lawrence's reports and dispatches can be consulted in the archives and this anthology can be used to gain a fresh insight into the life and military career of the first great British hero of the twentieth century.

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[1] See Appendix II to *Seven Pillars*.

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA'S SECRET DISPATCHES DURING THE ARAB REVOLT 1915–1919

1. *L. Woolley to Foreign Office*[1] (August 1914)

Dear Sir,

I fancy that my name has come before you in connection with work in North Syria; and during last winter I assisted in the survey of South Palestine up to the Egyptian frontier, carried out by Captain Newcombe R.E.

Should the present troubles extend in the Near East and the Turkish Empire take sides against us, I think that, as I know the language, the people and the country, I might perhaps be of some use to the Government. I propose to enlist in the regular army so as to be trained for any such emergency; I do not know whether my enlistment would prevent my being called upon for any special work that might otherwise have been assigned to me.

I may add that, besides Arabic, I know a fair amount of Modern Greek.

My assistant in Syria, Mr. T.E. Lawrence, of 2 Polstead Road, Oxford, would also gladly offer his services for any work in that part of the world.

Hoping that I may be called upon in case of need I beg to remain

Yours obediently
Leonard Woolley

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2. *Syria. The Raw Material*[2] (25 February 1915)

Geographically, Syria is much parcelled out. The first and greatest longitudinal division is made by the mountains, which run like a rugged spine north and south close to the sea, and shut off the peoples of the coast from those of the interior. Those of the coast speak a different Arabic, differently intoned; they live in different houses, eat different food, and gain their living differently. They speak of the "interior" unwillingly, as a wild land full of blood and terror.

The interior is divided again longitudinally. The peasants in the valleys of the Jordan, Litani and Orontes are the most stable, most prosperous yeomen of the country; and beyond them is the strange shifting population of the border lands, wavering eastward or westward with the season, living by their wits only, wasted by droughts and locusts, by Bedouin raids, and if these fail them, by their own incurable blood-feuds.

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[1] Typescript sent to the Foreign Secretary, dated and personally signed, on paper headed 'Royal Societies Club, St James Street, S.W.' Record no. FO 371/2201. Leonard Woolley (1880–1960) was one of the most renowned British archaeologists of the period. He worked in Nubia and Mesopotamia, where he had T.E. Lawrence as an assistant, before becoming a sort of secret agent for the Royal Navy when the war broke out. He was among the promoters of the Arab Bureau in Cairo. Captured as a spy, he spent two years in a Turkish prison camp. Royal Engineer Captain Stewart F. Newcombe (1878–1956) was in charge of the geographic survey on the Sinai Peninsula. Leaving Marseille on 9 December 1914, Lawrence and Woolley arrived in Cairo on 15 December, after a short stop in Athens.

[2] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 44, 12 March 1917, with the following note as a foreword: 'Fragmentary notes written early in 1915, but not circulated.' Yale University Archives has a copy from the collection of William Yale, MS 658, Series II, box: 2, folder: 19, dated '25 February 1915'. The text, for the most part, would become part of Chapters LVIII and LIX of *Seven Pillars*.

Each of these main north and south strip-divisions is crossed and walled off into compartments mutually at odds: and it is necessary, if political composition of Syria is to be gauged, to enumerate some of the heads of these.

The boundary between Arab and Turkish speech follows, not inaptly, the coach-road from Alexandretta to Ezaz, and thence the Baghdad railway to Jerablus. On the west it begins among Ansariya, disciples of a strange cult of a principle of fertility, sheer pagan, anti-foreign, distrustful of Mohammedanism, but drawn for the moment to Christianity by the attraction of common persecution; the sect is very vital in itself, and as clannish in feeling and politics as a sect can be. One Nosairi will not betray another, and they will hardly not betray Mohammedan and Christian. Their villages are sown in patches down the main hills from Missis to Tartus and the Tripoli[1] gap, and their sheikhs are Aissa and old Maaruf. They speak Arabic only, and they have lived there since, at least, the beginning of Greek history. They stand aside from politics, and leave the Turkish government alone in hope of reciprocity.

Mixed among the Ansariya are colonies of Syrian Christians, and south of the Orontes are (or were) solid blocks of Armenians, who spoke Turkish, but would not consort with Turks. Inland, south of Harim, are settlements of Druses (who are Arabs) and Circassians. These have their hand against every man. North-east of them are Kurds, speaking Kurdish and Arabic, settlers of some generations back, who are marrying Arabs and adopting their politics. They hate native Christians most, and next to them Turks and Europeans. Just beyond the Kurds are some Yezidis, Arabic-speaking, but always trying in their worship to placate a spirit of evil, and with a warped admiration for crude bronze birds. Christians, Mohammedans and Jews unite to spit upon the Yezid. After the Yezidis lies Aleppo, a town of a quarter of a million people, and an epitome of all races and religions. Eastward of Aleppo for sixty miles you pass through settled Arabs, whose colour and manner becomes more and more tribal as you approach the fringe of cultivation, where the semi-nomad ends and the Bedawi begins.

If you take another section across Syria, a degree more to the south, you begin with some colonies of Mohammedan Circassians near the sea. They speak Arabic now and are an ingenious but quarrelsome race, much opposed by their Arab neighbours. Inland of them are districts reserved for Ismailiya. These speak Arabic, and worship among themselves a king Mohammed, who, in the flesh, is the Agha Khan. They believe him to be a great and wonderful sovereign, honouring the English with his protection. They hate Arabs and orthodox Muslimin, and look for the crumbling of the Turk. Meanwhile, they are loathed and trampled on by their neighbours, and are driven to conceal their beastly opinions under a veneer of orthodoxy. Everyone knows how thin that is, and they maintain among themselves signs and pass-words by which they know one another. Miserably poor in appearance, they pay the Agha a princely tribute every year. Beyond the Ismailiya is a strange sight, villages of Christian tribal Arabs, some of semi-nomad habits, under their own sheikhs. Very sturdy Christians they are, most unlike their snivelling brethren in the hills. They live as do the Sunnis round them, dress like them, speak like them, and are on the best of terms with them. East of these Christians are semi-nomad Muslim peasants, and east of them again some villages of Ismailiya outcasts, on the extreme edge of cultivation, whither they have retired in search of comparative peace. Beyond them only Bedouins.

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[1] Present-day Lebanese Tripoli is the ancient Tarablus.

Take another section through Syria, a degree lower down, between Tripoli and Beyrout. To begin with, near the coast, are Lebanon Christians, Maronites and Greeks for the most part. It is hard to disentangle the politics of the two churches. Superficially, one should be French and the other Russian, but a part of the Maronites now have been in the United States, and have developed there an Anglo-Saxon vein which is not the less vigorous for being spurious. The Greek church prides itself on being old Syrian, autochthonous, of an intense local patriotism that (with part) would rather fling it into the arms of the Turk than endure irretrievable annexation by a Roman power. The adherents of the two churches are at one in unmeasured slander of Mohammedans and their religion. They salve a consciousness of inbred inferiority by this verbal scorn. Behind and among the Christians live families of Mohammedan Sunnis, Arabic-speaking, identical in race and habit with the Christians, marked off from them by a less mincing dialect, and a distaste for emigration and its result. On the higher slopes of the hills are serried settlements of Metawala, Shia Mohammedans who came from Persia centuries ago. They are dirty, ignorant, surly, and fanatical. They will not eat or drink with an infidel (the Sunni as bad as the Christian), follow their own priests and notables, speak Arabic but disown in every way the people, not their co-sectarians, who live about them. Across the hills are villages of Christians, yeomen, living at peace with their Sunni neighbours, as though they had never heard the grumbles of their fellows in the Lebanon. East of them are semi-nomad Arab peasantry.

Take a section a degree lower down, near Acre. There are first, Sunni Arabs, then Druses, then Metawala to the Jordan valley, near which are many bitterly-suspicious Algerian colonies, mixed in with villages of aboriginal Palestinian Jews. The latter are an interesting race. They speak Arabic and good Hebrew; have developed a standard and style of living suitable to the country, and yet much better than the manner of the Arabs. They cultivate the land, and hide their lights rather under bushels, since their example would be a great one for the foreign (German inspired) colonies of agricultural Jews, who introduce strange manners of cultivation and crops, and European houses (erected out of pious subscriptions), to a country like Palestine, at once too small and too poor to repay efforts on such a scale. The Jewish colonies of North Palestine pay their way perhaps, but give no proportionate return on their capital expenditure. They are, however, honest in their attempts at colonisation, and deserve honour, in comparison with the larger settlements of sentimental remittance-men in South Palestine. Locally, they are more than tolerated; one does not find round Galilee the deep-seated antipathy to Jewish colonists and aims that is such an unlovely feature of the Jerusalem area. Across the eastern plain (Arabs), you come to the Leja, a labyrinth of crackled lava, where all the loose and broken men of Syria have foregathered for unnumbered generations. Their descendants live there in rich lawless villages, secure from the government and Bedouins, and working out their own internecine feuds at leisure. South of them is the Hauran, peopled by Arabs and Druses. The latter are Arabic-speaking, a heterodox Mohammedan sect, who revere a mad and dead Sultan of Egypt, and hate Maronites with a hatred which, when encouraged by the Ottoman government and the Sunni fanatics of Damascus, finds expression in great periodic killings. None the less, the Druses are despised by the Mohammedan Arabs, and dislike them in return. They hate the Bedouins, obey their own chiefs, and preserve in their Hauran fastnesses a parade of the chivalrous semi-feudalism in which they lived in the Lebanon, in the days of the great emirs.

A section a degree lower would begin with German Zionist Jews, speaking a bastard Hebrew and German Yiddish, more intractable than the Jews of the Roman era, unable to endure near them anyone not of their race, some of them agriculturists, most of them shopkeepers, the most foreign, most uncharitable part of its whole population. Behind these Jews is their enemy, the Palestine peasant, more stupid than the peasant of North Syria, materialist and bankrupt. East of him lies the Jordan valley, inhabited by a charred race of serfs, and beyond it, group upon group of self-respecting tribal or village Christians, who are after their co-religionists of the Orontes valley, the least timid examples of their faith in the country. Among them, and east of them, are semi-nomad and nomad Arabs of the religion of the desert, living on the fear and bounty of their Christian neighbours. Down this debatable land the Ottoman government has planted a long line of Circassian immigrants. They hold their ground only by the sword and the favour of the Turks, to whom they are consequently devoted.

These odd races and religions do not complete the tale of the races of Syria. There are still the six great towns, Jerusalem, Beyrout, Damascus, Hama, Homs, and Aleppo to be reckoned apart from the country folk in any accounting of Syria.

Jerusalem is a dirty town which all Semitic religions have made holy. Christians and Mohammedans come there on pilgrimage; Jews look to it for the political future of their race. In it the united forces of the past are so strong that the city fails to have a present: its people, with the rarest exceptions, are characterless as hotel servants, living on the crowd of visitors passing through. Questions of Arabs and their nationality are as far from them as bimetallism from the life of Texas, though familiarity with the differences among Christians in their moment of most fervent expression has led the Mohammedans of Jerusalem to despise (and dislike) foreigners generally.

Beyrout is altogether new. It would be all bastard French in feeling, as in language, but for its Greek harbour and its American college. Public opinion in it is that of the Christian merchants, all fat men, who live by exchange, for Beyrout itself produces nothing. After the merchants its strongest component is the class of returned emigrants, living on their invested savings, in the town of Syria which, to them, most resembles the Washington Avenue where they 'made good'. Beyrout is the door of Syria, with a Levantine screen through which shop-soiled foreign influences flow into Syria. It is as representative of Syria as Soho of the Home Counties, and yet in Beyrout, from its geographical position, from its schools, from the freedom engendered by intercourse with many foreigners, there was a nucleus of people, Mohammedans, talking and writing and thinking like the doctrinaire cyclopaedists who paved the way for revolution in France, and whose words permeated to parts of the interior where action is in favour. For their sake (many of them are martyrs now, in Arab eyes) and, for the power of its wealth, and for its exceeding loud and ready voice, Beyrout is to be reckoned with.

Damascus, Homs, Hamah, and Aleppo are the four ancient cities in which Syria takes pride. They are stretched like a chain along the fertile valleys of the interior, between the desert and the hills; because of their setting they turn their backs upon the sea and look eastward. They are Arab and know themselves such.

Damascus is the old inevitable head of Syria. It is the seat of lay government and the religious centre, three days only from the Holy City by its railway. Its sheikhs are leaders of opinion, and more 'Meccan' than others elsewhere. Its people are fresh and turbulent, always willing to strike, as extreme in their words and acts as in their pleasures. Damascus will move before any part of Syria. The Turks made it their military centre, just as naturally as the Arab opposition, or Oppenheim and Sheikh Shawish established themselves there.[1] Damascus is a lode-star to which Arabs are naturally drawn, and a city which will not easily be convinced that it is subject to any alien race.

Hamah and Homs are towns which dislike one another. Everyone in them manufactures things – in Homs, generally cotton and wool, in Hamah, silk and brocade. Their industries were prosperous and increasing; their merchants were quick to take advantage of new outlets, or to meet new tastes. North Africa, the Balkans, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia used their stuffs. They demonstrated the productive ability of Syria, unguided by foreigners, as Beyrout demonstrated its understanding of commerce. Yet, while the prosperity of Beyrout has made it Levantine, the prosperity of Homs and Hamah has reinforced their localism, made them more entirely native, and more jealously native than any other Syrian towns. It almost seems as though familiarity with plant and power had shown the people there that the manners of their fathers were the best.

Aleppo is the largest city in Syria, but not of it, nor of Turkey, nor of Mesopotamia. Rather it is a point where all the races, creeds and tongues of the Ottoman Empire meet and know one another in a spirit of compromise. The clash of varied characteristics, which makes its streets a kaleidoscope, has imbued in the Aleppine a kind of thoughtfulness, which corrects in him what is wanton in the Damascene. Aleppo has shared in each of the civilisations which turn about it, and the result seems to be a lack of zest in all that its people do. Even so, they surpass the rest of Syria in most things. They fight and trade more, are more fanatical and vicious, and make most beautiful things, but all with a dearth of conviction that renders their great strength barren. It is typical of Aleppo that here, where yet Mohammedan feeling runs high, there is more fellowship between Christian and Mohammedan, Armenian, Arab, Kurd, Turk and Jew, than in, perhaps, any other great city of the Ottoman Empire, and more friendliness, though less licence, is accorded to Europeans on the part of the average Mohammedan. Aleppo would stand aside from political action altogether but for the influence of the great unmixed Arab quarters which lie on its outskirts like overgrown, half-Nomad villages. These are, after the Maidan of Damascus, the most national of any parts of towns, and the intensity of their Arab feeling tinges the rest of the

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1. Max von Oppenheim (1860–1946) was a German archaeologist who, during the First World War, carried out espionage and propaganda activities against the French and British. He directed the 'Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient' in Berlin, a sort of equivalent of the Arab Bureau. In January 1917, the British had news (not particularly well-founded) of a secret mission by Oppenheim to Medina by which the Germans hoped to negotiate a peace with Sherif Hussein. Oppenheim had established political relations with Sheikh Abdul Aziz Shawish (1876–1929), a pan-Islamist of Tunisian origin who rose up against the Italians in Libya and who was considered by the British to be a very dangerous fanatic.

citizens with a colour of nationalism, which is by so much less vivid than the unanimous opinion of Damascus.

In the creeds and races above described, and in others not enumerated, lie the raw materials of Syria for a statesman. It will be noted that the distinctions are political or religious; morally the peoples somewhat resemble one another, with a steady gradation from neurotic sensibility, on the coast, to reserve, inland. They are quick-minded, admirers (but not seekers) of truth, self-satisfied, not incapable (as are the Egyptians) of abstract ideas, but unpractical, and so lazy mentally as to be superficial. Their wish is to be left alone to busy themselves with others' affairs. From childhood they are lawless, obeying their fathers only as long as they fear to be beaten, and their government later for the same reason: yet there are few races with greater respect than the upland Syrian for customary law. All of them want something new, for with their superficiality and their lawlessness is combined a passion for politics, the science of which it is fatally easy for the Syrian to gain a smattering, and too difficult to gain a mastery. They are all discontented with the government they have, but few of them honestly combine their ideas of what they want. Some (mostly Mohammedans) cry for an Arab kingdom, some (mostly Christians) for a foreign protection of an altruistic Thelemic order, conferring privileges without obligation. Others cry for autonomy for Syria.

Autonomy is a comprehensible word, Syria is not, for the words Syria and Syrian are foreign terms. Unless he has learnt English or French, the inhabitant of these parts has no word to describe all his country. Syria in Turkish (the word exists not in Arabic) is the province of Damascus. Sham in Arabic is the town of Damascus. An Aleppine always calls himself an Aleppine, a Beyrouti a Beyrouti, and so down to the smallest villages.

This verbal poverty indicates a political condition. There is no national feeling. Between town and town, village and village, family and family, creed and creed, exist intimate jealousies, sedulously fostered by the Turks to render a spontaneous union impossible. The largest indigenous political entity in settled Syria is only the village under its sheikh, and in patriarchal Syria the tribe under its chief. These leaders are chosen, not formally, but by opinion from the entitled families, and they rule by custom and consent. All the constitution above them is the artificial bureaucracy of the Turk, maintained by force, impossible if it were to be carried out according to its paper scheme, but in practice either fairly good or very bad, according to the less or greater frailty of the human instruments through which it works.

Time seems to have proclaimed that autonomous union is beyond the powers of such a people. In history, Syria is always the corridor between sea and desert, joining Africa to Asia, and Arabia to Europe. It has been a prize-ring for the great peoples lying about it, alternately the vassal of Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Arabia or Mesopotamia, and when given a momentary independence by the weakness of its neighbours, it has at once resolved itself fiercely into northern and southern, eastern and western discordant 'kingdoms', with the areas and populations at best of Yorkshire, at worst of Rutland; for if Syria is by nature a vassal country, it is also by habit a country of agitations and rebellions.

The proposals to make Syria an Arab or foreign-protected country are, of course, far from the hearts of the 'autonomy' party, but the conviction of their internal divisions, and the evident signs that Syria's neighbours are not going to be of the weak sort that enable it to snatch a momentary independence, have reconciled these parts to having such proposals constantly on their lips.

By accident and time the Arabic language has gradually permeated the country, until it is now almost the only one in use; but this does not mean that Syria – any more than Egypt – is an Arabian country. On the sea coast there is little, if any, Arabic feeling or tradition: on the desert edge there is much. Indeed, racially, there is perhaps something to be said for the suggestion – thrown in the teeth of geography and economics – of putting the littoral under one government, and the interior under another.

Whatever the limits of future politics, it can hardly be contested that, like a European government, an Arab government in Syria, to-day or to-morrow, would be an imposed one, as the former Arab governments were. The significant thing is to know what local basis, if any, such a government would have; and one finds that it would be buttressed on two fronts, both contained in the word 'Arab', which seems to strike a chord in some of the most unlikely minds. The Mohammedans, whose mother tongue is Arabic, look upon themselves, for that reason, as a chosen people. The patriotism which should have attached itself to soil or race has been warped to fit a language. The heritage of the Koran and the classical poets holds the Arabic-speaking peoples together. The second buttress of an Arab polity is the dim distortion of the old glories and conquests of the Arabian Khalifate, which has persisted in the popular memory through centuries of Turkish misgovernment. The accident that these ideas savour rather of Arabian Nights than of sober history retains the Arabs in the conviction that their past was greater than the present of the Ottoman Turks.

To sum up – a review of the present components of Syria proves it as vividly coloured a racial and religious mosaic to-day as it has notoriously been in the past. Any wide attempt at autonomy would end in a patched and parcelled thing, an imposition on a people whose instincts for ever and ever have been for parochial home-rule. It is equally clear that the seething discontent which Syrians cherish with the present Turkish administration is common enough to render possible a fleeting general movement towards a new factor, if it appeared to offer a chance realisation of the ideals of centripetal nationalism preached by the Beyrout and Damascus cyclopaedists of the last two generations. Also, that only by the intrusion of a new factor, founded on some outward power or non-Syrian basis, can the dissident tendencies of the sects and peoples of Syria be reined in sufficiently to prevent destructive anarchy. The more loose, informal, inchoate this new government, the less will be the inevitable disillusionment following on its institution; for the true ideal of Syria, apart from the minute but vociferous Christian element, is not an efficient administration, but the minimum of central power to ensure peace, and permit the unchecked development that will find, in Moslem Syria, any really prepared groundwork or large body of adherents is a Sunni one, speaking Arabic, and pretending to revive the Abbassides or Ayubides.

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3. *Lawrence to Crosthwaite*[1] (12 September 1915)

Dear Crosthwaite that map of Sinai is good: but some of the names in the heart of the hills want cleaning. Can you do this? Also if the Ball work would be pantographed down and fitted in near Abu Zenima? Then we want 20 copies to start. TELawrence.

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4. *Lawrence to Crosthwaite*[2] (14 September 1915)

Dear Crosthwaite just under the Y of Ladikya in the title of Ladikya sheet within an inch of the top of the sheet is Kasr el Benat. S.W. of Kasr el Benat is El Kaytib a ruin: & just north of that a little blue stream, which runs downs [*sic*] towards Yeni Shehir. It is the nearest water to Kasr el Benat. The [erased here: head] source of this water is called Aian Dilfa. Will you add it to sheet, in blue. yours TELawrence.

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[1] Autograph, signed, dated, on letterhead 'Military Intelligence Office, War Office, Cairo'. Margin note: 'Mr. Logan, At leisure please.' written by Crosthwaite and dated '12.9.1915'. W.H. Crosthwaite was Controller of Printing to the Egyptian Government and Map Officer to HM Forces. Sir Ernest M. Dowson (1876–1950), at the time Financial Advisor to the Egyptian Government and Director General of the cartographic service, records that in Lawrence's first meeting with Crosthwaite he proceeded to 'criticise somewhat severely the system of transliteration of Arabic names into Roman characters that the Survey of Egypt adopted. As Crosthwaite had been closely concerned personally with the establishment of this system and had spent many months in studying the subject and in discussing it with recognised experts, his first impression of Lawrence was one of wonder as to who this young man was and of astonishment at his impudence' (in A.W. Lawrence (ed.) *T. E. Lawrence by His Friends*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1937, p. 137). This letter, like the following ones (Nos 4–6) recently appeared on the antiques market.

[2] Autograph, signed, dated, on letterhead 'Military Intelligence Office, War Office, Cairo'. Margin note: 'Mr. Logan, For Action.' Written by Crosthwaite and dated: '14.9.1915'.

5. *Lawrence to Crosthwaite*[1] (11 November 1915)

At the Railway Bridge E. of Adana, & N.E. of Missis, between Missis & Hamidi, on the Cilicia sheet, it should be Chakal Dere (the village next door) & not Chikaldir. Can you alter the black plate? TELawrence

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6. *Lawrence to Crosthwaite*[2] (11 November 1915)

Please write the word Mamouré [toponym repeated in all capitals under the word] against the next station E of [here erased word, unreadable] Uzmanie on the Bagdad line. It is marked now as STA. The nearest village is Dervishie. Please add to Black Plate of Cilicia sheet. TEL

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7. *The Politics of Mecca*[3] (End of January 1916)

The aim of the Sherif Hussein, since midsummer of last year, has been to reconcile all the Arab powers in Arabia; to do this, it was first necessary to persuade them to abandon all side-issues.

Hail. His missives to Ibn Rashid had not much success. The Emir could not refrain from making forays into the rear of Ibn Saoud's dominions, while he was away in the Hasa. Sherif Abdulla did, however, succeed in defeating the counsels of the Turcophil advisers at Hail, who were advocating common action with the Turks and the Muntefik against the British. Ibn Rashid found several of his more powerful supporters against the proposed move, and the split intensified to such an extent, that several Ateiba sheikhs left Hail, and returned in Abdulla's train to Mecca.

Riadh. Between the Sherif and the Wahabi power there has been a truce of late. This is perhaps natural, as the Wahabis are too weak at present to cause the Sherif any apprehension. There is little doubt however, that there will be a clash between them again, if Ibn Saoud grows really strong. The misdeeds of the Wahabis, a century ago, when they laid waste the Holy Places of Islam, ill-treated the Imams, and prevented the pilgrimage, united the whole of Islam against them, and spurred event the Egyptians into undertaking a campaign of extermination.

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[1] Autograph, signed, dated, on letterhead 'Military Intelligence Office, War Office, Cairo'. At the bottom of the letter: 'Rec. 12.11.15' written by Crosthwaite. In reference to Cilicia (coastal region of southern Turkey) is tied to Lawrence's hopes for a British landing: in fact, in November 1916 Lawrence still considered a landing in Alexandretta as advantageous (see report No. 11 transcribed here).

[2] Autograph, signed, dated, on letterhead 'Military Intelligence Office, War Office, Cairo'. At the bottom of the letter: 'Rec. 12.11.15' written by Crosthwaite.

[3] Typescript unsigned but unanimously attributed to TEL. Transmitted by the Director of Intelligence, Cairo, to H. McMahon on 7 February 1916 and re-transmitted by McMahon to E. Gray, record. no. 25, 30673, full complete text in IOR/L/PS/10/525. Copies also in FO 141/461, FO 371/2771 and SAD 135/1/1-5. Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Sir Arthur Henry McMahon (1862–1949) was the High Commissioner in Egypt from 1915 to 1917. In *Seven Pillars*, Lawrence recalls him in Chapter VI: 'his shrewd insight and tried, experienced mind understood our design at once and judged it good'.

The Wahabi sect, as a form of extreme puritanism, has latent in it something of the destructive force of the Roundhead party in England, and if it prevailed, we would have, in place of the tolerant, rather comfortable, Islam of Mecca and Damascus, the fanaticism of Nejd, as described by Palgrave, intensified and swollen by success.

Further, for his immediate purpose, the Sherif has no use for Ibn Saoud. The Sherif wishes to hunt out the Turks from Arabia, and in no direction can Ibn Saoud aid him in this object. He cannot let Wahabi fighting men into the Hedjaz; there is no road for them to Yemen, nor would they go so far afield; and Ibn Rashid would not tolerate Saoud's help in the North. The Wahabi state is a purely Arab one, ringed round, and hemmed in, by deserts, and by unfriendly Arab states, with no foreign policy that touches the Turks, and no influence (except on the Gulf Coast) on any larger sphere of interests.

Asir. Idrisi's tribesmen went solid for the Wahabis at their moment of success, and therefore to the Meccans they too are in the shadow of that nightmare. Also, the rule is in Arabia that you are better disposed to one further off, than to your neighbour. However it is, there has been for long discord between Asir and Hedjaz, and this persisted till about nine months ago. Negotiations have since been incepted between the Sherif and the Idrisi to forego his futile attacks on Yemen. He was not fighting the Turks so much as the strong border tribes, who object to be plundered by Asir, even in the name of an anti-Turk crusade. The Sherif looks upon the Imam as the person to carry out his ideas in Yemen, and he will eventually, if his schemes bear fruit, turn the energies of the Asir tribes northward against the Turkish garrison of Kunfida and Ibha. This Turkish force threatens the rear of the Hedjaz, and its removal is a preliminary to successful operations in the Holy Cities.

Yemen. Between the families of the Sherif at Mecca, and the Imam at Khamir or Sanaa there is an old friendship. Politically there are close relations between them. The Sherif was the instigator of the treaty between the Imam and the Turks, which transformed the Yemen from the cockpit of Arabia to a well-behaved, prosperous and semi-autonomous province. Fear of the Idrisi was the motive of this reciliation of the Turk and Arab.

Of late, when the Turks made their attack on Aden, the Sherif counselled abstention to the Imam; and more recently, in a conference at the pilgrimage season, when the Imam's brother, who represented him, urged the advantages to Arabia of enrolling all the tribes of the Aden Hinterland under the Zaidi flag, the Sherif again dissuaded him, and explained his political intentions to the Imam in a letter, which drew a satisfactory reply. The Sherif is now at work to reconcile, if only temporarily, Asir and Yemen, in pursuance of his policy of shutting down all side-shows, and holding the whole force of what Arab states there are, ready for a simultaneous attack on one side or the other, according as their interests seem to be with the Allies or against them.

Somaliland. The Sherif is in touch with the Mullah, and has pressed on him to same counsel of inactivity, pending directions how he may best act in conformity with the general lines of Arab politics. He has prevailed to date.

The Sherif's methods. He sends his orders and suggestions – and in the flux of Arab politics the latter are always the more potent – by letter, unsigned and unsealed. They are en clair, and if the country is quiet are carried by messengers of importance. In secret missions to the Arab of Syria, or to Constantinople he uses women to carry his letters.

Public proclamations he disseminates, by writing a first draft himself, and giving it to one of his following. The duty is laid on each recipient who can write to send out two copies. These proclamations (generally sumptuary) used to reach the Northern boundary of Arab speech on the Euphrates in about ten days from Medina, in 1912–1914. Sherif Hussein's brother, Nasr, is in Constantinople, openly on bad terms with him, and exiled from the Hedjaz. In reality, however, Nasr has a passion for intrigue, and is strongly pan-Arab. He acts as the secret agent of his brother, and handles the theological party of the Capital at his will, in favour of the ruling house of Mecca.

Sherif Haidar is the great danger to Hussein. He tried some years ago to capture the headship of the Islamic and more fanatical wing of the Pan-Arabs, representing that Hussein was so lax and tolerant, and so much a statesman as to be unworthy of the Khalifate. He over-reached himself, however, for his own history is full of intimate relations with foreigners (Turks, British, and others), and was confounded. He was therefore forced out of the Hedjaz, and went back to Constantinople. He is ambitious, energetic, and well educated. He has thrown himself on the Turkish side, working for a reformed Islam (i.e., an Islam which shall be not a faith, but a political weapon), and has the sworn promise of the Government that he shall succeed Hussein, as soon as the latter can be removed.

Sherif Hussein is not working in the British interests, except so far as they further the particular dreams and hopes of the political party to which he belongs. His aim is the establishment of a Khalifate (not the only one) for himself, and independence for people speaking Arabic from their present irritating subjection to people speaking Turk. His aims are thus in definite opposition to the Pan-Islamic party, who are his strong obstacle, and to the Young Turk party, who are however less dangerous to his schemes; his activity seems beneficial to us, because it marches with our immediate aims, the breaking up of the Islamic "bloc" and the defeat and disruption of the Ottoman Empire, and because the states he would set up to succeed the Turks would be as harmless to ourselves as Turkey was before she became a tool in German hands. The Arabs are even less stable than the Turks. If properly handled they would remain in a state of political mosaic, a tissue of small principalities, incapable of cohesion and yet always ready to combine against an outside force. The alternative to this seems to be the control and colonisation by a European power other than ourselves, which would inevitably come into conflict with the interests we already possess in the Near East.

Sherif Husein's activities have already been of use to us. He has held in the Iman from attacking Aden, he has quieted the mullah in Somaliland, he has divided the counsels of Ibn Rashid. He has refused to preach a Jehad, or to allow the legal Jehad to be declared; he has countered, and is still countering, Turkish influence in the Hejaz; he has prevented the raising of volunteers; and has forbidden the placarding of anti-British news in the public places of Mecca; all this obviously with a mind to some day taking the place of the Turkish Government in the Hejaz himself. If we can only arrange that this political change shall be a violent one, we will have abolished the threat of Islam, by dividing it against itself, in its very heart. There will then be a Khalifa in Turkey and a Khalifa in Arabia, in theological warfare, and Islam will be as little formidable as the Papacy when the Popes lived in Avignon.

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8. *Cablegram from Chief Direction Military Intelligence, London to Intrusive Cairo*[1] (29 March 1916)

[...] Captain Lawrence is due at Basra about the 30th March from Egypt to consult with you and if possible purchase one of the Turkish leaders of the Mesopotamian Army, such as Khalil or Negib, so as to facilitate relief Townshend. You are authorised to expend for this purpose any sum not exceeding one million pounds. As no suitable native was immediately available Lawrence proceeds alone, but perhaps a suitable go-between can be found in Basra. [...]

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1. Unsigned typescript, record no. FO/882/13 MES/16/5. The cablegram refers to the 'desperate' mission with which they tried to save the British expeditionary force in Mesopotamia. The Turkish army had bottled the English led by General Charles Ferrers Townshend (1861–1924) in Kut without there being any hope of escaping defeat: the siege lasted from 5 December 1915 to 26 April 1916. It was thought to bribe one of the Turkish generals to facilitate the rescue of the British, but the mission was not successful. Lawrence had participated as an expert in the area and being able to communicate with their counterparts thanks to his knowledge of the language.

9. *Lawrence to Intrusive*[1] (8 April 1916)

I have discussed with Cox your views and I understand the following are his personal views: 'Main reason why there is at present difficulty in reconciling the views of Egypt, Mesopotamia and India (all of which necessarily regard issues from different standpoints) is that no steps have been taken by the British Government to ascertain fully these several views and to bring them into line, in order to evolve definite policy which should be enunciated and imposed on all of them. That this is what is now required, and that to achieve that end a round table conference is needed under the presidency of a statesman, who would carry sufficient weight with all three elements, and at which the latter would be represented by individuals who could speak with authority. That in view of early occupation of Bagdad is is urgent that such a conference should be convened without delay and it would not be difficult to depute suitable representative from Mesopotamia.'

Following notes my own, not submitted to Cox, and for yourself.

He agrees with addition of Aden as a principal to the conference. Indian interests are secondary and will be enough represented by Lord Hardinge as Chairman: he thinks that Lord Hardinge is very sound. Conference should be [... ?-ly], of so few members as possible, to consider British interests. It should decide on general principles as well as lay down line of treatment of Arab difficulties (Egypt, Aden, Mesopotamia) all of which require different handling.

Cox dissociates himself from India very clearly; he does not know how Cairene he is. He favours of hoisting at Bagdad the British flag and Arab flag together, but until peace is declared is against definite declaration that we will not annex Bagdad for fear of tying our hands. He can be brought round on this point as people at Basra are getting tired of us and anticipation of something better when peace comes would prevent Bagdad going the same way should army perhaps want formal annexation of all conquests.

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[1] Dated and signed typescript, with the wording 'Copy of cablegram from Lawrence Basrah to Intrusive Cairo, Despatched 11 a.m., 8th April 1916. M.S.L.'. Record no. FO/882/15 PNA/16/2. The gaps indicated were due to telegraphic transmission problems. Probably sent to D.G. Hogarth (1862–1927), one of the greatest archaeologists of his time. Lawrence's teacher of archaeological studies and information activities, he directed the *Arab Bulletin* and was one of the proponents of the establishment of the Arab Bureau. General Percy Cox (1864–1937) was the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf from 1904 to 1919 and Chief of the Political Bureau of the Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF). After the war, Cox became High Commissioner for Iraq. Charles Hardinge, 1st Baron Hardinge of Penshurst (1858–1944), was named Viceroy of India in 1910. He stayed on in India until 1916, when he returned to the Foreign Office as Permanent Under-Secretary. In October 1916, Mark Sykes described the situation in Arabia as follows: 'The political confusion arising out of a multiplicity of councils and counsellors and overlapping functionaries reaches a climax this week. There is no way of summarising what we are doing, because the telegrams are a perfect babel of conflicting suggestions and views, which intertwine from man to man and place to place in almost inextricable tangle'. See *Arabian Report*, N.S. No. XIII, October 11, 1916 (night).

Cox is entirely ignorant of Arab Societies and of Turkish politics. He should be sent notes by Deedes[1] on the CUP [the Committee of Union and Progress, i.e. the 'Young Turks'] and the Turkish [...?]. He does not understand our ideas but is very open and will change his mind as required.

His complaints of Cairo is that Mesopotamia was mentioned to the Sherif. I think that I have put this right.

He is against the introduction of Arab officers as he thinks that us wish to rid Egypt of some gas-bags who are impatient there. He was a very free hand and seems to be the only person who counts politically. He works almost entirely from his own hand without such reference to local advice, but his instinct seems to be very certain and he is carrying on as far as possible the former system. Land settlement conspicuous success.

He would like Sultan of Egypt to issue a proclamation like Agha Khan that war with Turkey is lawful exercise for Moslem. This is for Indian troops here who are unsatisfactory. They seem to associate political Islam with Turkey only. Draft should be sent to Cox for his remarks. A good impression would be produced if the Sultan or Red Crescent would send gifts to the Mahometan Indian Troops in Mesopotamia.

10. *Lawrence to Intrusive*[2] (9 April 1916)

Following extract from letter from Shakespear of January 17th 1915 at Riadh to Cox: 'If the Sultan of Turkey were to disappear the Khalifat by the common consent of Islam would fall to the family of the prophet the present representative of which is the Sheriff of Mecca. In this case he would command the support of the Ibn Saud.'

I have been looking up pan-Arab party at Basra. It is about 12 strong. Formerly consisted of Sayed Taleb and some Jackals [*sic*].

The other Basra people are either from Neid interested in central Arabia only and to be classed with Arabia politically or peasants who are interested in date palms or Persians. There is no Arab sentiment and for us the place is negligible. This partly explains Cox' limitations. He, however, admits that

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[1] Wyndham Henry Deedes (1883–1956) was a Colonel and Chief Secretary in the English protectorate in Cairo. He was part of the intelligence service under Clayton. There is a photo of him with Lawrence in Palestine where he held the position of High Commissioner.

[2] Dated and signed typescript, with the heading 'Cablegram. From Captain Lawrence, Basra. To Intrusive, Cairo. 9.4.16. M.S. 3'. Record no. FO/882/15 PNA/16/3. Copy in FO 141/161. About Shakespear, see note no. 1, p. 177.

Bagdad stands on different footing and should not be entered until policy has been determines on.
Cox' telegraphic address C.P.O., Basra.

* * *

11. *The conquest of Syria. If complete*[1] (First half 1916)

Presumably we intend any attack we make on Syria to have the effect of ousting the Turks from it entirely. So draw a line from Haifa to Bagdad and take everything S. of that would leave the Turks in Damascus: and the possessors of Damascus (as was beautifully demonstrated fifty times over in the Crusades) can at any moment cut off Syria and Mesopotamia from one another. One cannot make a railway from Suez to Akaba, and from Akaba to the Persian Gulf.

If we wish to be at peace in S. Syria, and hold S. Mesopotamia as well, and to control the Holy Cities, it is essential that the owner of Damascus should either be ourselves, or some non-Mohammedan power friendly to us.

If we go N. of the Haifa-Bagdad line, and take Damascus, as leave the Homs district in Turkish hands, then our position at Damascus is no better than our former position in S. Syria without Damascus. The way of attack from the N. is still wide open, and easy. We would then have to make an agreement with France.

Suppose we go on from the Haifa-Damascus line, and take Beyrout, Tripoli and Homs … we then find ourselves getting into the rich plain of N. Syria (agriculturally, except for the Hauran to the S. of Damascus, the only decent part of the whole country). If therefore we got to Homs we would have to go on to Hama and Aleppo successively, and advance N. of Aleppo till we got to the line of the Asia Minor hills. We would there find the northern limit of the Arab people, about on the line of the Alexandretta-Beilan-Killis [erased here: Aleppo] road. Our imaginary frontier to the East would meanwhile have been advancing: from Haifa-Deraa-Bagdad it would have become in succession Damascus-Bagdad, Homs-Bagdad (both practicable railway routes) and Aleppo-Bagdad, along the Euphrates.

The tribes of middle Mesopotamia would not be pleased at being left to Turkey (Pan-Arab feeling is very strong N. of Bagdad) nor would they be an edifying sight if they were left to form their own government. Therefore the owner of the Alexandretta [erased here: Aleppo] – Killis [erased here: front] – Bagdad front would inevitably find himself possessed of Mosul, Mardin

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[1] Unsigned autograph manuscript, dated '1916' (probably first half) at the beginning above the title. Record no. FO/882/16 SY/16/1. Lawrence's reflections must have come after his mission in Mesopotamia and before the beginning of the publication of the *Arab Bulletin*. See also Lawrence's paper here at No. 2. In December 1915 an Anglo-French conference was held on the Syrian question and the distribution of the respective zones of influence in that territory.

(perhaps even Diarbekir) and Urfa. He would then have reached at once the limit of the plain country, and the limit of Arab-born and Arab-speaking peoples, at the same time. And presumably he would not go any further. Advance Northward from this limit is very difficult even in summer, and unprofitable, since the population is largely Armenian.

By holding Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus, the links between Egypt, Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia are all held at once, and (granted a satisfactory Russian advance) the Turks would find themselves reduced to Asia Minor, a very convenient country, tied in on three sides by sea (one which they have no control) and on the fourth by a jumble of hills, difficult to pass over with the best intentions on both sides, and quite impossible to force against the will of even a small contrary [erased here: force] army on either side.

Presumably if we were thus possessed of all Syria, it would be convenient for us to divide our spoils with France. Except for the oil-bearing country on the Dead Sea Syria is of negligible value to people who own Canada and Mesopotamia. She has few minerals and is very small. At the same time she would make a beautiful gift-horse.

On the other hand it may be suggested that the complete conquest outlined above is an unnecessarily big affair, and that we might content ourselves with taking Bagdad-Persian Gulf on the one hand, and Haifa-Jordan valley-Dead Sea-Akaba on the other [end of the sentence added with a line on the upper margin of the paper] and leave our allies to acquire the rest of Syria by their own efforts. This would be very simple. [six lines erased here. It is still possible to read them: "makes the job of holding Bagdad enormously expensive since ... the Turks in Asia Minor would send down troops by way of Adana-Aleppo-Mosul or Deir whenever they pleased. Bagdad is only a city in a open-plain and unlike we made it a line of fortresses it would not pay us to hold it"]

It is probable that Russia is on no account to hold Alexandretta. It is a magnificent harbour, in a position of great commercial importance, and if fortified, it would involve our [erased here: building] making a containing fortress of Cyprus to bottle it up. This would be enormously worthy.

If we [erased here: gone] conquered Syria to Haifa, we might stop there and request the French to complete the business. This would destroy completely our prestige in Arab countries (which would probably react on India). It would be understood that we had failed in strength. On the other hand if we waited and did nothing, while the French landed an expeditionary force in N. Syria and took it, and they then gave us the S. half of the country, it would mean our taking bloodless possession, which would be an economy. We would have to be very sure of the French before we let them do this: and it would not increase our reputation any more than a partial occupation would do.

It is also possible that the French would refuse our offer to them of the opportunity of such a conquest. It would be difficult for them to equip an overseas expedition of such a scale at the end of the present war: and if they refused, and we had done nothing while waiting for them to move, we would have a Germanised-Turkey at our doors, the withdrawal of a futile expedition into Mesopotamia to gloss over; and the pan-Arab movement starting again with thrice the justification, for the remain of Turkey after Russia has done with her, will not be of a nature to overawe Arab consciences.

If we advanced to Haifa and Bagdad, and then stood still and called on France, and she didn't come, then we have two failures to gloss over, and considerable expense in men and money thrown away.

It may be asked why should it be necessary to withdraw from the line Haifa-Bagdad? Why should not this be held as a permanent Anglo-Turkish frontier?

Bagdad is a city in a plain, and has no defensible positions N.S. or W. of it: so that an imaginary frontier drawn across Mesopotamia near it would only be defensible if huge fortifications were established. Otherwise the power holding Aleppo and Diarkebir or Mosul will always have the whip-hand over the Bagdad-Basra region. Our forces in Haifa could not left Bagdad at all, since they would have no means of communications with her.

A frontier is not an easy thing to draw from Haifa: as far as the Jordan it is good enough, and up the Yarmuk to Dera'a. The line between Dera'a might easily be cut off from Palestine: and it being plain country is very open to attack from Damascus or from the desert. The occupation and retention of Dera'a would therefore be hazardous, if Damascus remains Turkish.

It may be asked, why hold Dera'a? Would not the occupation of Palestine proper, from the Mediterranean on the West to the Jordan on the East, be sufficient? It would be easy, and is a strong position.

This is true, but presumably England does not want merely to add to her Empire a few more square miles of territory. For the occupation of Palestine [erased here: Syria] proper would not have any great political effect. This war showed, if it resulted in anything at all, take away definitely and finally the religious supremacy of the Sultan [erased here: to declare a Holy War]: England cannot make a new Khalifa, as she has made a new Sultan, any more than the Japanese could impose a new Pope on the R.C. church. Nor can the Sultan of Egypt make himself Khalifa: for his action would be suspect, from his relations with us, and the true Arab and all the Syria has such a lively contempt and dislike for the loose-mouther Egyptian as would entirely forbid him ever to recognise any reported overlordship assumed by one without the force to support him.

The most probable claimant – barring the Sultan – to the Khalifate would be the Sherif of Mecca, who has been active in the last few years in Arabia and Syria, asserting himself as an arbiter of morals. He is held down by Turkish money – which we, via Egypt or India could replace with interest – and by a

Turkish Army Corp. The only way to rid ourselves of this (hostilities in the Yemen being impossible) is by cutting the Hedjaz line. The soldiers are paid and supplied with arms etc. along this line, and its existence is always a present threat of reinforcements. By cutting it we destroy the Hedjaz civil government which like all Turkish local administrations is excessively centralised: and we resolve the Hedjaz army into its elements: an assembly of peaceful Syrian peasants and incompetent akin officers. The Arab chiefs in the Hedjaz would then make their own hay: and for our pilgrims sake one can only hope, quickly. In any case if we cut the Pilgrim Railways the Turkish Govt. would irrevocably loose the Haramein … and that draws their teeth and renders them handless. The Beduin tribes hate the railway which has reduced their annual tolls and way-claims and would help us cut it.

This cutting can be done by occupying Dera's if Damascus is neutralised: at Amman, if Jerusalem can be passed by blowing up a viaduct: and at Maan, by an occupation.

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12. *Telegram from Viceroy, Foreign*[1] (28 May 1916)

Secret. Our telegram of 14th May. Arab Bureau. G.O.C., Force 'D' telegraphs I.G. 2857 22nd May. begins

You are I think aware that Captain Lawrence was recently deputed here temporarily from Egypt in connection with certain projects of which the Arab Bureau was one. From conversations held with him it would appear that the fact that the conduct of it has been retained in hands of Director of Military Intelligence has given us a somewhat erroneous impression of the status and objects of the Bureau which had regarded as mainly a war measure. In view of modified aspect in which institution is presented to us by Lawrence I propose that Miss Gertrude Bell and not Major Blake [handwritten: 'X ? Blaker'] should act as corresponding officer for Mesopotamia. To this and I contemplate if there is no objection giving her definite official status by Force Routine Order and placing her services at Cox's disposal granting her a fixed allowance a month for them. Cox and Lawrence who discussed the suggestion are of opinion that Miss Bell is well qualified for the task and her assumption of duties would be agreeable to Cairo and ourselves. She herself is quite prepared prima facie to fall in with the arrangement in which I trust the

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[1] Typescript, signed and dated. Record no. XP/20160/1916 in IOR/L/PS/10/576. Typescript copy in FO/882/14 MIS/16/4. The telegram had been sent to Operations Headquarters. Gertrude Lowthian Bell (1868–1926), writer and archaeologist, also in the orbit of the Arab Bureau, carried out intense intelligence activity during the conflict, dealing particularly with northern Arabia. Lawrence had already met her before the war while he was excavating Carchemish with Leonard Wolley and had formed a positive relationship with her, probably strengthened also by the fact that Gertrude Bell's best friend was Hogarth's sister, Janet.

Government of India will concur. ends. We agree. High Commissioner has been informed.

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13. *Intelligence. I.E.F. 'D'*[1] (End of May 1916)

In Mesopotamia there is a strict divorce between the political and military sides of Intelligence. The Political Department is a separate organisation under the Chief Political Officer, Sir Percy Cox. The Military Intelligence is under Colonel Beach. To preserve a fiction of control Sir P. Cox has been made a Colonel on the staff of the G.O.C. He works well with Colonel Beach personally, and each keeps the other somewhat 'au fait' with what he is doing. Their staffs are, however, quite separate, and hardly know each other.

The Military Intelligence

Colonel Beach is very excellent but he has never been in Turkey, or read about it, and he knows no Arabic. This would not necessarily matter, but unfortunately his staff do not supply the necessary knowledge. They are good men, but all beginners or amateurs at Intelligence work. None of them knows a word of Turkish, only one can speak Arabic. This one is an office man, who sits in Basra and runs the Secret Service work. He has a separate house and office of his own, and seldom sees Colonel Beach, who therefore gets no advice from him.

(1a.) It is rather difficult for us to realise that the Intelligence Staff at such places as Basra, Amara, Ali Gharbi, Sheikh Saad, Nasiriya, Ahwaz, and with the Corps in the fighting line, cannot speak any of the local languages. They do all their examination of agents, prisoners and refugees, through interpreters. They have never learnt or read anything of the manners of Turk or Arab, or of their customs. They know nothing of the country beyond them: they cannot test an agent by cross-questioning: the supply of good interpreters is very limited, so that many of the finer points that make the difference between obvious truth and falsehood are missed. Also you get gross errors of place or number, besides confusion of technical military terms.

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[1] Original typescript, dated. Wingate Papers, record no. SAD 137/7/3-23. The report, sent by Lawrence to General Clayton, was then passed on by the latter to General F.R. Wingate (1861–1953), Director of the Secret Services in the British contingent dispatched during military campaigns in the Sudan; he held the post of Sirdar (or Commander-in-Chief) of the army as well as Governor-General of the Sudan; later he became High Commissioner for Egypt. Gilbert F. Clayton (1875–1929) was the Director of Information Services assigned in 1916 to the Arab Bureau. This is how Lawrence remembers him in *Seven Pillars*: 'Clayton made the perfect leader for such a band of wild men as we were. He was calm, detached, clear-sighted, of unconscious courage in assuming responsibility' (Chapter VI). William Henry Beach (1871–1952), also mentioned later, was the head of the Military Intelligence Service in Mesopotamia and it was he who accompanied Captain Aubrey Herbert (1880–1923) and Lawrence on the mission to try to save the besieged British at Kut (see No. 8 transcribed here).

They get their knowledge of Turkish communications from the various military reports (none of them has served on a railway, or knows much about supply or transport work): they learn the Turkish Army from the Turkish Army Handbook, and they follow events in Turkey from the Cairo Bulletin, which is a sort of Bible to them. They receive practically nothing from London except the 'Marsh' telegrams from Tiflis. They are mostly anxious to pick up all they can, and they make very good use of all they get.

I think we might make our Bulletin a little simpler for their sakes. It strikes me – in Mesopotamia – as a little too specialist. There should be more summaries of what we know of Turkish finance, trade statistics, crops, and notes on the produce of particular vilayets, and the habits and peculiarities of districts and races.

Also we must send them a linguist or two, who knows the inside of Turkey. Henry would be the best man if he is available. We should henceforward take anything they send us, such as train time-tables, march-rates, agents' information, and identifications of units opposed to them (other than by contact) with reserve, since many of their sources are so uncritical.

(1b.) The Secret Service work done by Intelligence Officers outside Basra is not well done. The man at Amara is trying very hard to work up a system. His agents, through his interpreter, spend their time telling wild fictions, or denouncing their private or tribal enemies as Turcophiles.

Capt. More

In Basra the S.S. work is being run by Captain J. C. More, the solitary member of the Intelligence Staff who speaks Arabic. He also knows Persian. He has lived and travelled in Syria, understands the Arabs, and gets on well with them.

The scheme of getting agents into Syria, which we put up to them some months ago, is in his hands. He has a big system afoot, with men going to Jauf, Damascus, Aleppo, Diarbekir, Mosul, Deir and Baghdad. He also gets in a good deal of local information and was I thought, very sound indeed. He is doing all this single-handed, and if anything happened to him there is nobody to take his place.

We discussed S.S. work, and worked out a number of common schemes, which I will not write down. They have unlimited funds, and carte blanche: also they are willing to do anything or everything.

(1c.) There are two separate mapping sections.

Survey of India

One is under Colonel Pirrie, of the Survey of India. It consists of four or five officer surveyors, a dozen Indian surveyors, many chainmen, a

Vandyke[1] section, and a printing section with two or three machines. It is quite independent of Colonel Beach, but in touch with him and does any special jobs he wants. This survey work seems very good. They have triangulated from Fas to Ali Gharbi, on a half-inch scale, going three miles each side of the river. Also from Kuma to Nasiriya. They are doing Basra-Nasiriya, and Basra-Kuwait. They also did a patch round Kut. They would have done other areas but the Army makes difficulty about escorts. I do not think the work could be bettered, except in the matter of collecting place names. These are awful. On the field sheet nearly every name is wrong, and broader errors such as villages called 'Place', 'I don't know', 'Tents', 'Mound' are pretty common. When a selection of names has to be made, they generally put in the ephemeral ones, and miss out the permanent. I am afraid this fault is unavoidable with the native surveyors. Fortunately they have now recognised that a careful checking of the names is necessary before reproduction, and Miss Bell is getting the correct Arabic form of each one, so far as she can.

Vandyke Section of Survey of India. The Vandyke section sent out by the Survey of India said there was oil on the surface of the Tigris and struck work. I don't think they knew their job. There has been a good deal of difficulty with Indian skilled labour. They now use autograph transfer for everything. The draughtsman (Indian) is very bad. He loses most of the character of the field sheets in copying them, and his pen work and writing are wretched. The results are, therefore, unnecessarily poor. It struck me that the transfer paper was stretching a good deal. The air of Basra is rather moist.

Printing Section. The printing machines are old. I think there was something wrong with the bed of one: with another you get the pressure by screwing down, for each pull, a boxwood block with a knife edge, on to the cover plate. Four men then grind it through. They can do seventy pulls a day on this machine (a decent machine will do two thousand). They use zinc plates, which they grain locally by hand. They seemed very badly done. They have also run out of paper and are using cheap sheets, supplied by the *Basra Times*.

It seems a pity that such good survey work should be spoiled by bad machinery and labour in reproduction. They excuse it by saying that their copies are only provisional, and that India will produce the final. Only India seems to take six months to do the work, so that enough corrections have come in to justify a new edition before the first one comes out.

R.E. Litho and Printing Section.

The Military Intelligence (Colonel Beach) have also a Map Section. Most of this is attached to the Corps Headquarters, and works up at the firing line.

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[1] The Vandyke photographic printing method involved a treatment with acids, silver nitrate and ultraviolet light without the need for a darkroom.

What is left at Basra confines itself to issuing corrections to degree sheets. It does these rather nicely. The Section with the Corps produces all the large-scale operations maps and all the artillery maps and trench maps. There is no surveyor belonging to it.

By some unfortunate mistake the trig, survey from Basra was stopped at Ali Gharbi, and began again at Kut. All the fighting between Sheikh Saad and Kut has therefore been over unsurveyed country. The only maps available were the quarter-inch degree sheets. These show almost nothing but the main stream of the Tigris. Captain Hamilton's survey seems to be the main authority. He did his work half-surreptitiously, drifting down the river, and checking his distances by a stop-watch and the estimated speed of the river. In the circumstances his results were wonderfully good – but you get a constant error of two or three hundred yards, and local errors up to 1,500 yards or a mile.

When artillery maps were first called for, the Corps produced them by enlarging the degree sheet twelve times, to 3 inch. The originals are slight enough, and of course the enlargement was mostly white paper. The Corps then began to fill these maps in from aeroplane photographs. Planes were sent up to observe, or drop bombs, or food, and they used to take trench photographs incidentally. These were, therefore, necessarily scratch productions, taken from all angles, usually without overlap, at any time of day, and on half a dozen scales. The prints were sent up to the Corps (some miles from the aerodrome) and were handed over to the G.S.O.3. to be drawn up in his spare time. He had no instruments except pencil, dividers, and an army protractor. He had never drawn anything before. He used to guess where the photographs fitted, guess what scale they were on, and adjust them to the old degree sheet (with its error of 1,200 yards or so). He worked very hard at them but he was no topographer, and used carefully to leave out every natural feature. The results are trench diagrams only.

It is then drawn by hand on stone (they have only three stones, so that one map has to be rubbed out before another can be done) and printed in a press like a mangle which does up to three hundred a day. Editions of three thousand are sometimes produced. The maps are a great advance on the degree sheets, and are improving steadily; but they are still too inaccurate to be of much use; are confused and difficult to read, and are printed on very soft paper which tears at once in a wind.

Colonel Beach asked me to give him a note on what could be done to improve things. I suggested:-

1. That the trig, survey be extended as soon as possible to the firing line, and beyond, as in Gallipoli. It will not be hard to fix some points in the Turkish lines, for the country, though flat, has a lot of minor detail in it: and until these control points are in, it will be impossible to fit your photographs perfectly.

2. That whenever serious photography is required, an aeroplane be sent up to do nothing else. Massy backed me up very warmly in this and other suggestions.
3. That some form of correcting apparatus, like our 'Bahel' be installed. I promised to consult Dowson about it, and let Colonel Beach know the latest developments.
4. That a special officer be told off to compile the air photographs. The present one has to do his ordinary work as well, and in consequence it is all scamped. I would like Dowson to lend them Hayes for a couple of months. He has had more air-photograph compilation than anyone alive, does it magnificently, and besides would teach them what draughtsmanship means.
5. That a decent tent be provided as a drawing office. Careful work is impossible in the present dusty conditions.
6. That the compilation and drawing be done at the aerodrome, to ensure the co-operation of observers and compiler. You can cross-question the observers on details and they will get keen on the map they see being drawn, and will take pains to get the right photographs.
7. That zinc plates be used instead of stones. They will crack a stone soon – besides it will save continual redrawing of the same area, if the originals of former maps are kept ready.
8. That a Vandyke section be set up, if possible. It would save hours (or days) in time, and the results are neater and more accurate. It will have to be run by soldier labour. If Dowson could spare Cowan he would do it, or Buttanoni could be lent perhaps as a teacher.
9. That a new printing machine be bought. The higher proportion of British troops means more maps, and the force in Mesopotamia should be independent of India at a pinch, so far as map production goes.

   With an up-to-date machine doing two thousand or three thousand copies a day you could print in colours. A blue on the artillery maps, to bring out rivers, lakes, floods and marsh, would make them twice as attractive, and much clearer to use.
10. That all maps to be used for any length of time in the field be printed on linen-backed paper. I have promised thirty reams of our own to start them.
11. Until accurate maps are obtainable I suggested the use of balloon theodolites with smoke balls. They were very pleased with some trials they made of these.

The areas that require correct artillery maps are I think:-

(1) The present front-line (by air-photo checked on advanced trig, points)
(2) Nasiriya (Survey)
(3) Sheikh-Saad to Um el Hanna (Survey).

This is not a very large programme, as survey in Mesopotamia is quick and easy. The aeroplanes have no trouble in identifying the ground, as there is a great deal of shape in it

I would have liked to have got them a camera for enlargement or reduction, but I am afraid it would be too ambitious. I suggested taking a 60-foot barge for the mapping section, and getting the new machine, the dark rooms, and the drawing office into it. But barges are very scarce, and they say too hot in summer for working in.

(1d.) Colonel Beach said the Censor Department was working excellently.

The Political Department

The Political Department under Sir Percy Cox wears khaki uniform and white tabs. Some of its people are officers, and some civilians. Most of them know Arabic or Persian, and one (Bullard, Levant Consular Service) knows Turkish well, and most of Turkey and its politics. Another of them is Leachman,[1] the Arabian; also Noel, and Young and Eadie. As far as expert knowledge goes the Political Department is as well served as the Military Intelligence is badly served.

'Political Department' is rather a false name. It is really a civil service and is mostly taken up in administration. Under it are the Customs, Excise, Land Revenue, Taxation, Crown Lands, the Judiciary, the Police, River-Conservancy. Headquarters is at Basra, but there are assistants at all large centres in our occupation. They are, of course, entirely distinct from the Military Intelligence Officers at the same places.

Capt. Wilson[2]

Of the politicals only Sir Percy Cox (and his assistant, Captain Wilson) do politics proper. They deal with Ibn Saoud, Ibn Rashid, Kuwait, Mohammerah and the rest.[3]

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1. Lieutenant Colonel Gerard Evelyn Leachman (1880–1920) had served in the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa. In 1917, after service in Mesopotamia, he was working on the future structure of Arabia after the war. He was killed in 1920 during an anti-British uprising in Baghdad.
2. Captain, later Colonel, Cyril Edward Wilson (1873–1938), as Governor of the Sudan provinces of Sennar, Khartoum and the Red Sea, had been designated as British liaison officer to King Hussein of the Hejaz. Lawrence often talks about him in *Seven Pillars*, underlining his undoubted diplomatic qualities and the great support offered to the cause of the Arab Revolt. In fact, Wilson was, with Mark Sykes, an *éminence grise* of the British in the heart of the Arab Revolt.
3. Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al Saud (1875–1953) controlled Nejd, the eastern region of Saudi Arabia, until 1922. He had led a guerrilla war against the Ottoman Empire since 1904. Later, having also assumed control of Hejaz (1925), he soon became the first king and founder of present-day Saudi Arabia. Saud bin Abd al-Azīz Al Rashid (1898–1920) was Al Saud's antagonist among the Saudi dynasties aiming for control of Arabia. Initially siding with the Turks,

Sir P.Z. Cox

Sir Percy Cox is High Commissioner except in name. He is absolute dictator in the Gulf, and will remain so as long as he is there. He is delightful to work with. His fear of us was mostly because he thought we aimed at getting the Sherif a temporal ascendancy over the Arab-speaking world. When I gave him a sketch of our ideas on a united Arabia he was pleased – and relieved. However, he will not take orders or suggestions about his policy from anyone but London, and he knows London so well that I feel sure this is only a diplomatic way of taking no orders at all. He would like a round-table conference with you, and would send Dobbs to it: I think more for Dobbs' sake than his own, for it looks as though Dobbs would succeed him out here when he goes.

H.R.C. Dobbs[1]

Dobbs is one of the most interesting people I met in Mesopotamia. I think he is probably an Indian civilian. They made him Chief of the Revenue Department, as which he had to settle land disputes, and oversee the sub-letting of the Crown lands. The Turks left him vast confusion in the province. They got away most of the official registers: what they left were ill-kept, and their system had been to enter on paper enormous rents for the various estates, and in practice to hold in check the tribal leaders by the accumulation of unpayable arrears. Also they had an odd habit of entering the name of a dead man as formal tenant.

The statelands are let on leases (average term of four or five years) in great blocks to rich Pashas and chiefs of tribes. These sub-let their holdings to contractors, who sublet to farmers – under whom are the peasants or *fellahin*. Some *fellahin* are tenants at will, others adscript for a term. The latter are the better off, for they cannot be dismissed without compensation. The crops

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he controlled the Shammar tribe of which he was Emir. The British managed to lure the Shammars into the area of influence of Sherif Hussein of Mecca and his son Feisal. The conflicts between ibn Saud and ibn Rashid created numerous problems for the British and Lawrence often mentions them in his reports transcribed here and also in *Seven Pillars*. Mohammerah (today's Khorramshahr in Iran) was a province of Mesopotamia at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates.

[1] Henry Robert Conway Dobbs (1871–1934) dealt for a long time with the western borders of India, contributing to the settlement of the borders with Afghanistan. From 1923 to 1929 he became High Commissioner for Iraq, succeeding Percy Cox in the post. Later in the text, *fellahin*, from Arabic, stands for 'peasants'. Further on, Reader William Bullard (1885–1976) was a Levant Consular Service official who was in Mesopotamia during the war and, in 1920, became the Military Governor of Baghdad. Later, Lawrence, along with Bullard, cites George Ambrose Lloyd (1879–1941), an English politician who was among the first members of the Arab Bureau in Cairo and held the position of Chief of the Political Bureau, devoting himself mainly to financial matters and trade matters; during the Arab Revolt, he served with the rank of captain. See *Seven Pillars*, Chapter VI.

are usually rice, barley and wheat, sometimes two crops a year, sometimes one only.

The year of change of lease is usually a fallow, and the river silt deposited in flood is the only food the land gets. Dobbs and Bullard (I don't know the precise virtue of each) went into this question, gave title-deeds, assessed rents, solved disputes of succession, rights of way, water, estimated the values of crops disposed of or spoiled, granted compensation for the events of war, and at the end of their year they not only showed a profit in administration, but left a contented province behind them. They both understand and like the natives, took the right manner with landlords and landowners, and scored a tremendous success for the British, in what was one of the most important (as it was certainly the most difficult) things we had to do. They are both reading men (Dobbs perhaps forty-five, Bullard perhaps thirty) with strong tastes in history and literature. Bullard is merely keen to get something done, but Dobbs has definite views in politics and differs from Cairo on several issues, for reasons thought out and made precise in his own mind. I think he will come into agreement when he has learned more (he suffers, like all the rest, because there is no one out there who knows what is going on, or what the rest of the Arab world is like), and in any case it is well worth while trying to make him a convert, for he will act vigorously on his opinions, and on him will, I think, depend very largely the line of our future policy in Mesopotamia. He is due for leave in August for some months and Sir Percy is quite willing to let him off in mid-June, if we can have him in Cairo for a bit, and discuss the Near East with him and a man from Aden.

Arab Bureau

When notes on this first came out Sir Percy Cox said he would have nothing to do with it, and so Colonel Beach had to undertake it. He appointed a Major Blaker, of the Military Intelligence, who was at a loose end, to act as local correspondent of the Bureau.

Major Blaker is very intelligent and quite ready to be interested in local politics, but has never been in the East before. I went to Sir Percy, explained that the Bureau was a Foreign Office affair, and insisted that its correspondent must be intimate with the work of the political side. I told him we would want notes on public opinion in Basra or the villages, especially when it was dissatisfied: also on all religious movements, tribal affairs, with estimates of the personal character and importance of leading sheikhs or politicians; details of our negotiations with Ibn Rashid, Ibn Saoud, and the others; geographical distributions of tribes, trade statistics, figures of local taxation, summaries of land settlements, and notes on any trials or legal cases of political interest.

As every item of the above is dealt with by the Political Department, and is never heard of by Colonel Beach or his office, Sir Percy Cox eventually agreed to alter his decision. Major Blaker will continue to exist, as a sort of pillar-box, and because I think it is a happy way of drawing the attention of the Military Intelligence to a side of the work which it has missed, but the actual collection and selection of information for us will be done for the present by Miss Gertrude Bell, She will work up the connections we require with the various Political Officers and will see that extracts from the Political files are sent us regularly. Meanwhile she will search for a good successor to herself from among the politicals (Bullard or George Lloyd seemed to me possibles), and will later write and tell us who it might be. She is already doing the tribal and geographical work the Bureau needs, herself, as there is no officer in Basra qualified to do it. I have a feeling that no one person will be able to supply us with all we want, unless his fellow politicals get interested and send him in special stuff, and I think Miss Bell, by her sex and energy and lack of self-consciousness, is peculiarly likely to persuade Political Officers to send her what she asks for. At present what I would describe as the social side, the particular province of the Eastern Bureau, is being entirely neglected officially in Basra:- though men like Leachman, Young, Eadie, and Dobbs are doing magnificent work in keeping in friendly touch with the people, and winning their respect for our administration.

The Eastern Bureau is going to be so useful to them on its publicity side, that I think it may make all its activities welcome in the end. At first, though, we should go very easy with the Mesopotamians: they feel that we will use them and what they have conquered as a bribe to make our policy acceptable elsewhere, and make their area a dumping ground for theories and theorists of a nationalism inconvenient in Egypt.

Local Feeling

Basra

Basra itself has no politics. It does not appeal as a residence to the leisured class, and is itself not one town, but the sum of a number of overgrown villages. In consequence it has none of the corporate feeling of Baghdad, Aleppo or Damascus; and the date crop, rice and foreign trade are its interests. You can get individual opinions in Basra, but no common point of view.

Marsh Arabs

I think the hostility of the tribal Arabs towards us has been greatly overdrawn. Of course there are the Maadan, the Arabs of the marshes, who are impure savages, without any code of manners or morals to restrain them. Their hand is against every stranger – but even among them there is no antipathy to the British as such. They hate us perhaps more than they do the Turk, in so far as they see our rule will be more efficient, and therefore worse for them. They cut up our wounded and the Turkish wounded, raid our convoys and the Turkish convoys, steal our rifles and the Turkish rifles – but to know how to estimate the Maadan, ask a tribesman his opinion of them. We cannot condemn them in stronger terms than do the real Arabs living round them, and if we make their hostility typical (as the second-rate local 'eye-witness' does) we only show up our own lack of understanding.

Hai Tribes

The great block of Arab irreconcilables are the tribes along the Shatt el Hai. These are independents, rich, well organised, with tribal customs, but of Shia stock. They have fought the Turks incessantly and driven back three formal expeditions made against them. Recently they claimed a fourth victory (over us this time) when General Brooking retired from Butuniyah. They are a confederation who mean to be free and undisturbed, who would be friendly to us only if they thought our rule so weak as to allow of general anarchy. If we remain outside their borders they will let us alone (I do not believe they will even attack Nasiriya); if we invade them they will fight us – if the Turks invade them in force I believe they will drive them back – on the other hand, I think they would allow a small Turkish contingent to come down and raid our communications, as it is only conquest they are afraid of. I rather sympathise with them, though of course their pretensions to remain an independent little state of freebooting freelancers in the middle of Mesopotamia is absurd. To put them down by force will probably cost us more than we could profit. By damming the north end of the Hai we will subdue them inevitably; and by carrying out the irrigation scheme we put an end to their present existence.

Of the other Arabs, in tribes or villages or towns, the rule is that those in front of us are hostile and those behind friendly. Hostility to us does not in this case mean friendship with, but only subjection to, the Turk. In truth all these people (like the 35th and 38th Divisions) do not want to fight, and are indifferent to the change of masters. If we had played our cards better at first, I do not think there would have been even the fighting there has been – but we have entered their country (for it is their country, and not the Turks') like sphinxes, never saying why we came or what we meant to do. A public declaration, properly explained, of our intentions and policy would even now give them a clear issue, and rank them with us or against us.

At present the rule for the doubting is to stand in with the Turks. They know the best and worst of them and we are an incomprehensible quantity. Also the Turks punish a backslider much more savagely than we can do: for one thing they are not our rebels, and again it is not our manner.

In considering Mesopotamia and the tribes, I think one should bear in mind how transient all these things are. We will presumably not remain there unless we are in a position to carry out a full irrigation scheme. When we regulate the rivers we also drain the lakes and swamps, and prevent marshes and floods. With these latter go the present livelihood of the marsh tribes.

We will be able to starve a rebellion by shutting down a sluice, or drown it by opening them too wide. When the country is parcelled out by orderly roadways and canals, and watered by an irrigation inspector, in accordance with the bye-laws and local water regulations, the style and mode of living of the farmers there will have changed as much as their system of land tenure. The increase of land values will make the burden of great estates like the present ones too heavy for any man to bear, and the sheikh and the tribal organisation will have no more chance than it would have in Egypt today. In place of his present occupations of blood feud and foray, the landowner of the future will drive his motor car and gamble in margins in the pit at Basra. The Government will be very prosperous at that time – for about half of Mesopotamia is Crown land, and the annual value of it will be staggering.

Complaints

I saw something of many kinds of Arabs, and heard their grievances. None of them had anything very serious though of course few of them love their government (even some English people don't). We have been very fair to them in compensating them for the loss of crops. Owing to shortage of river transport they have been unable to sell the surplus of their harvests, and in some districts the necessity of making or breaking the dykes that control the river has prevented a rice crop. One tenant of Crown lands whose normal rents are £40,000 a year has been excused some £17,000, and others in fit proportion. This is some loss to us, but the province has still shown a profit, and the concessions have been very much appreciated.

We have been conservative in settling disputes. We have decided that no decision of a Turkish Appeal Court may be revised. This measure is perhaps justified in expediency, by the feeling of security and continuity it gives the rich man who has bought favourable but iniquitous verdicts in the past. We have introduced the Indian code of law into Basra, and by translating it at once into Arabic have given the people for the first time courts in their own language. They are grateful.

There is a current of British opinion which favours the introduction of a tribal law (as in Sinai) for the country districts, when the time comes for us to administer them.

The Police are unsatisfactory, from our standard, perhaps because the native officer is inefficient. Still, they are better than they were, so the local people do not feel aggrieved. It is a compliment to us that they judge us by a higher standard than they did the Turks,

I think we made a mistake in driving Ajaimi into the other camp. Before the war he was generally disliked, and could hardly fill fife estates. We are going about now to make him a popular hero – and all for the lack of a bit of politeness and a small burnt-offering to the absurd family pride of the Saaduns.

Politeness is still associated with greatness, by the Arabs. Basra itself has one grievance, which, silly though it sounds, is actually doing us some harm. The local Pashas and Beys have no great one on whom they can go and call. The town notables long for a leisured and dignified vali, who would rise from the divan to meet them, and would give them cigarettes or coffee, and do them little unimportant favours.

It would certainly be to the advantage of our government if they did receive the formal entertainment they crave for. The attitude of the Pashas means a good deal on their estates, and in the current of general public opinion in the towns – and at present the Pashas feel themselves slighted. It is no use in the East being friends only with the common inarticulate people.

Our present Headquarters in Basra is all Indian, without even an A.D.C. who can speak three words of Arabic, or a servant who could hand a cup of coffee or a cigarette to a great man in the proper form. This was all well when we were an invading Indian army – but in our second year we should have sobered down into occupation and ownership,

Religious Questions

For us now these resolve themselves almost entirely into questions of *Waqf.*[1] The population is composed of Sunni landowners, and a few tribes of Sunni Beduin, but the rest are all Shites. Perhaps 70 or 80 per cent of the total population is Shia. Dogmatic rivalry is fairly strong,

The only official Waqf is Sunni, and it is showing a considerable annual surplus. Sir Percy Cox, and Dobbs, proposed to hand this over at once to the Sherif of Mecca, for relief of pilgrims, etc., but were refused permission by India and home. In peace times the Waqf surplus belonged to the Sultan, and was absorbed by the Waqf Ministry in Constantinople. If the money is kept in hand till the end of the war it will certainly (under pressure of the Indian Moslems) be disposed of in the traditional way. This would be a wanton strengthening of the hands of Turkey, and as well an acknowledgement by us of the Khalifate of the Sultan, which conflicts with the attitude of non-interference with that vexed question, strictly maintained by us lately. To assign the Waqf surplus to the promotion and relief of pilgrimage is a neutral way out of an unpleasant difficulty and I hope may yet be approved.

Besides the Sunni Waqf there is in Basra some landed property belonging to the Sherifate of Mecca, and administered directly by his representatives in Basra. The question of the Shia Waqf is coming to the fore. The Turks refused to allow it, and the Shias therefore constituted private trusts to the same end. They have now asked to be allowed a public Waqf. No answer was returned, but private instructions were given to the Land Department to accept such trusts.

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[1] Arabic term for real estate sold for general charitable purposes. The administration of these funds had formed a kind of Ministry of Social Affairs in Turkey, as Lawrence explains later.

I think we should go a little further than this, in pursuit of a fiction of religious equality. The difficulty before us will be if a surplus occurs, to whom to pay it. A solution proposed locally is that we should elevate the President of the College of Mullahs at Kerbela to be a kind of Shia Sherifate. This would presuppose a British overlordship of Kerbela and Najf. In view of the coming importance of Persia and the tremendous pull over the Shia world such a position would give us, it may be worth consideration. The Turks were of course too orthodox to gain a political profit from their possession of the Shia shrines, but as a Christian Power there is nothing to hinder our getting out of it all the prestige we can – and keeping on good terms with Mecca meanwhile, so that the two sects will play for our favour.

14. [*Arab Bureau Summaries will deal*][1] (6 June 1916)

Arab Bureau Summaries will deal with any political events in Turkey or elsewhere that affect the Arab movement.

They will be issued irregularly, with a serial number. Distribution as under.

The contents are to be treated as strictly secret, and extracts from them should not be made (even for other confidential summaries) until Intrusive, Cairo has been informed. They should not be shown except to officers actually concerned.

The Residency 5 (3 for FO)
GOC.-in C., EEF 1
HE the Sirdar, Khartoum 1
DID, Admiralty, London 1
Lt-Col. O'Sullivan, RM, Navy House, Port Said (for Naval C.-in-C.) 1
DMI, War Office, London 1
GOC, Nairobi, BEA 1
CGS, Army Headquarters, India 1
Brig.-Gen. Clayton 1
Lt-Col. Sir Mark Sykes, c/o DMI, London 1
Lt-Col. Parker 1

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[1] Unsigned but unanimously attributed to Lawrence. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 1, 6 June 1916. The first issue was distributed (only twenty-five copies) in typewritten form and in carbon or mimeographed copies; it was subsequently reprinted in approx. fifty copies. The *Bulletin* no. 1 bears at the bottom, on the 'cover', the indication 'T.E. Lawrence, Captain, for Director, Arab Bureau'. No. 1 and No. 9 are the only ones in which this happens. Lawrence may also have intervened minimally in the published texts. The last two lines of the text had been added by hand by Lawrence in his personal copy of the *Bulletin*.

Secretary, Foreign Dept, Simla 1
Sir P. Z. Cox, Basra 1
CPO, Aden 1
HBM Minister, Adis Abeba 1
Commissioner, Somaliland 1
HE the High Commissioner, Cyprus 1
ADI, Khartoum 1
R. Storrs, Esq. 1
Colonel Wilson 1
Arab Bureau 2
Col. Murphy 1
Fforde 1
Lawrence 1
Col. Watson 1

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15. *Mesopotamia*[1] (14 June 1916)

To the British Officers who were arranging the exchange of our wounded from Kut,[2] Halil Pasha, Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces in Irak, spoke very freely on the question of the Arab attitude. At first he proposed the exchange of Indian sick for Arab prisoners of war; but later he went back on this, and refused to accept Arabs in exchange at all. He said that most of them were condemned to death, and would only be shot if they returned; and that in any case he did not want them. He said that ninety per cent of Turks were good soldiers, and ninety per cent of Arabs were bad. He said their desire was only to get taken prisoner, and that the whole lot of them were unreliable. Under protest he excepted from his condemnation some of the Arabs of Mosul and Syria, who were, he said, sufficiently 'Turkised' to have some virtue. Kasim Bey, his Chief of Staff, agreed with what he said, and it seemed to be the view shared by the younger officers we met. I suggested to them the case of Sami Bey, and they said that the Russian War of '60 and the Defence of Kars fell on a different footing, when the Arabs were still loyal to the Ottoman Empire. Lieutenant Mehmed Riza classed the Kurd tribes with the Arabs in disloyalty and disinclination to fight. This may lend colour to previous reports of disaffection among some sub-tribes of the Mili confederation. Representations were made to Halil Pasha concerning the fate of the Arabs of Kut. These had shown themselves, in the main, friendly to us, but has not been asked to take any active part in operations. Townshend's surrender having been unconditional, it was impossible to make any stipulation as to their treatment, but Halil was urged strongly to show moderation, and to treat them as compelled to side with us by force majeure.

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[1] Unsigned but unanimously attributed to Lawrence. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 3, 14 June 1916.

[2] See report of 29 March 1916, here at No. 8.

He said that he had no intention of going to extremes, and seemed rather amused on our interest in them. He broke the understanding, however, and has to date hanged nine individuals; they comprise a Turkish officer deserter, a Jew contractor, an Arab notable of Kut and his two sons, two Mukhtars and two prominent sheikhs.

Halil's record of service, which includes some months Kurd-hunting in Van before the war, and a peculiarly ghastly Armenian massacre in the Melazgherd area compels one to look upon this performance as humane. The executions are confirmed by British Officers engaged in removing General Townshend's wounded from Kut. It is reported that one prisoner, when being led to the gallows seized his Musbah (Mohammadan rosary) and flung it to a British officer over the heads of the Turks. The man may have been a Shia, indeed probably was, but even so the incident is probably unprecedented in modern Islam. Note. Halil's remarks about the Arabs, and the incident of the Musbah at Kut were reported by officers present under privilege from the Turks, and must not, therefore, be communicated in any way. They are given here as remarkable evidence of the relations existing in Irak between the Turks and their Arab subjects.

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16. *Draft letter to the Sherif*[1] (23 June 1916)

[erased here: *to be telegraphed to Port Sudan for translation by Ruhi and transmission to destination*]

[autograph by TEL:] Governor Port Sudan message begins

[typewritten:] 'After greetings. We have the honour to congratulate your Highness with great warmth and incerity upon the policy, the strategy and the bravery by which your Highness and the noble Arab nation have been able to achieve the first decisive victory whose results, diligently pursued, should deliver you from the oppression under which you have so long suffered, and restore to you the land which was your birthright since the beginning. These achievements have filled us with pleasure and admiration, fulfilling as they do your promises and our anticipations of the Arab strength and vigour. In order to continue the assistance we have begun, we are forwarding with this letter, for your military needs, [erased here: 'five'] three [added by hand by TEL] thousand rifles with their ammunition together with – (dash) [added by hand by TEL] maxims with ammunition, besides (dash) [added by hand by TEL at left margin: 'insert dashes here'] – guns with crews and teams. [added by hand by TEL] We are obliged for these last to send Egyptian crews as there are at present no Sudanese gunners, and the training of such would take at least six weeks. The gunners we send however have been most carefully chosen, and will, we are assured serve your Highness with faithfulness and diligence.

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[1] Typescript with autographs, dated '23 June 1916' and signed, on letterhead 'The Residency, Cairo'. Record No. FO 882/19 AB/16/21.

As moreover we fully understand the scarcity of provisions amongst your people, which scarcity is indeed likely to continue until the season of the pilgrimage, we are also sending you in the same vessel, the following supplies:

13500	lbs	Coffee.
270100	"	Barley [added by hand by TEL]
13500	"	Sugar.
227600	"	Rice.
522600	"	Flour.

which inshalla will alleviate your needs.

Your Highness will not fail to observe from the newspaper cutting we enclose, and from the newspapers in general, that the tidings of your victory have been published abroad. It had been stated that the pilgrimage road from Jeddah to Mecca is now open and preparations are being made in Egypt and in India to facilitate the arrival of the pilgrims. In this connection, the blockade which was instituted at your Highness' request, to suit the requirements of the situation which no longer exists, is clearly no longer necessary, and I have therefore ordered the raising of the blockade for Jeddah and for the Hijaz ports north of Jeddah, and shall be grateful if your Highness will inform me what port may profitably be opened to the South of Jeddah.

We are awaiting with deep interest news regarding the success of your operations at Medina, and in the matter of the destruction of the railway line northwards. In them and all your other operations I wish you complete success.

We on our part are considering how best to divert the attention of the enemy in other places.'

[added handwritten by TEL:] Message ends above is to be given to Ruhi to translate, and sent to Sherif from High Commissioner Sirdar to fill in blanks for number of guns and maxims, and copy of Arabic Communique published in Sudan to be enclosed.
Intrusive
Cipher Office
Please despatch in "V"
TELawrence

17. [*The blockade on the Hejaz coast*][1] (9 July 1916)

The blockade on the Hejaz coast has been raised, so far as Jidda and Lith are concerned, and dhows are again trading there with stores from Egypt and the Sudan. Telegraphic and telephonic communication between Jidda and Mecca is re-established, and it is hoped to repair the cable from Jidda to Suakin. The Sherif has asked for the restoration of a postal service, and passenger facilities. Lith surrendered on 23 June. The Sherif has decided to retain in his own hands the prisoners he has taken, and he has sent a wire for the President of the United States, begging him to inform Enver, Talaat, and Jemal that if his brother, Sherif Nasir, in Constantinople, or any of his relations in Turkish hands is ill-treated, he will retaliate on the civil and military prisoners he holds. A vigorous press propaganda directed in Constantinople by Shawish, and in Syria by Shekib Arslan (a Druse who turned Mohammedan some years ago) is being worked by the Turkish government against the Sherif. In Syria this will probably not be very effective as the Sherif has ninety per cent of the sheikhs firmly on his side.

The Sherif seems to have raised some 15,000 men to date. The Turks had the old Hejaz (22nd) Division in garrison in the province, and a new division, not yet brought up to establishment, in Medina. The latter is under Fakhri Pasha,[2] commander of the 12th Army Corps and second in command in Syria. He is ruthless, vigorous, and clear-headed, with a knowledge both of administration and of war. News from the Syrian coast is that ten battalions have been sent down the Hejaz line to reopen communications with Medina, and reinforce Fakhri. The Sherif has captured two trains, somewhere on the line north of Medina, but we have little information as to how much the line has been torn up. He is asking for native sappers to use explosives.

The Sherif on 8 June, betrayed that he was getting anxious about the position of Medina. The carriage of supplies has broken down, his forces are short of food, and are deserting him for the Turks, who can feed them. So long as this does not go too far there would be no harm in the Sherif suffering a mild check. He will be more modest and accommodating if he realises more closely that he is dependent on our help for success. Medina is too strongly held for him to assault it, and there is abundant food in it, for a longer seige than the Sherif desires. He is asking for howitzers, and more mountain-guns. Since the evening of 25 June, the Turks have not sent any wireless messages to Medina, though they still receive reports from Fakhri. It is, therefore, probable that the land line is restored. One Turkish message of 21 June, mentioned that a squadron of battle-planes was leaving Constantinople for Medina.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 9, 9 July 1916. For the title page of this issue of the *Bulletin* see note no. 47. In this case, there appears the signature 'TELawrence [followed by a small indecipherable glyph]' which appears autographed (but from a printing cliché, probably in mimeograph); it is followed by the indication 'for Lieut.-Cmdr. Arab Bureau'. Unsigned but attributed what is reported here on the basis of the handwritten annotation present in the copy of the *Arab Bulletin* owned by Lawrence.

[2] Ömer Fahrettin, also known as Fakhri Pasha (1868–1948), was the Turkish general who took charge of the strenuous defense of Medina during the Arab war. He only surrendered in January 1919. Lawrence often mentions him in *Seven Pillars*.

The news of a rising in Syria caused great relief to the Sherif. Rumour (which we believe greatly exaggerated) said that the Hauran Druses had rebelled, and that Nuri Shaalan with 15,000 Ruwalla had invaded the Damascus Vilayet, with the help of Arab officers, and the Fedaan. The Sherif appears at once to have foreseen a rapid invasion of Syria by his forces, and told us that further destruction of the Hejaz line was undesirable, as he would shortly need it himself. At Taif, Sherif Abdalla has captured a gun and 200 Turks. At Mecca the Egyptian artillery on 3 and 4 July, breached the small fort, which promptly surrendered. The barracks are still holding out, and the Sherif hopes to persuade them to surrender without violence. He is obviously very averse to fighting in the Holy City itself. The fort, however, had been bombarding the city, and was responsible for the shots which struck the Kaaba, and that which burned the Kiswa.

The Sherif has asked for recognition by the Allied governments, and that the pilgrimage shall take place as usual. He has suggested a radical reduction in pilgrimage dues, to celebrate the opening of the new regime. His military programme contemplates the formation of a disciplined army, with the help of Arab troops from the Turkish forces and Syrian and Mesopotamian officers. With these he intends to invade Syria, but the moment when he can undertake an offensive is so remote and his powers of an offensive without our co-operation so slight that we need hardly expect anything from him inconvenient to our plans. The Sherif estimates the Turkish forces in Syria at 38,000 but his information is not good.

At Jidda there is an entire lack of organisation. The townsmen are (as ever) afraid of the Arabs, and hope for control by us. The Ashraf are intriguing against one another, and have no administrative experience. The hold of the Sherif on the Arabs of the coast is not strong, and Turkish influence still exists at Yambo. There is great dislike of Egyptians, of course. Sherif Mehsin, the Sherif's representative in Jidda seems good, but knows little. The Sherif and his family show personal courtesy to our representatives, but others obviously distrust us. Public security is well maintained.

A draft proclamation from the Sherif, intended by him for publication is appended. It has not yet been distributed, and has only been submitted for our approval.

Idrissi[1] on 30 June, said that he intended about 10 July, to attack Kunfida and Mahail to cut communications on the north and join up with the Sherif. He has written a friendly letter to the Sherif, in which he called himself his servant, and asked for Emir Feisal to be sent to command him and his forces. He mobilised on 29 June, but found some difficulty in persuading some of his tribes to take up arms. He considers that the Imam is unfriendly, and is watching him, and he will not attack Lobeia until he has cleared his northern frontier. The Hashid and Bakhil tribes will remain neutral, unless we take special measures.

On 30 June, news was brought to Birk that the Sherif's forces were advancing on Kunfida. The news seems to have been exaggerated; and no confirmation has been received as yet. Kunfida is debateable land on the borders of the Sherif and the Idrissi. It is doubtful whether the relations between the Sherif and the Idrissi are good enough to make combined operations possible. The old ill-feeling might revive if there was disappointment or some booty to be shared. We have represented to each side how undesirable collision would be and ships were sent to supervise the operations, with the result that Kunfida surrendered to us on 8 July. The Idrissi flag was hoisted. The garrison composed of eight officers and 190 men, were taken prisoners.

* * *

18. *Note by Cairo on Arab Labour*[2] (5 September 1916)

The success or failure of Arab labour depends almost entirely on the treatment the individual man receives from his employer. The tribesman is not sufficiently advanced to be directed by economic laws: nor is there anywhere in the provinces of Turkey a population dense enough to supply a large floating class of casual workmen.

Cant phrases of the dignity of labour are not yet current in Arabic, and unskilled labour, far from receiving the tribute of uncomprehending respect accorded it in the rare atmosphere of unions, is still held more degrading than honest beggary. It is worthier to starve on your own tiny plot, than to hire out your body for a wage, and in consequence the Arab day labourer is most often drawn from the worst class, and performs his task by rote, neither thinking nor caring about it. Such men are everywhere irremediably unskilled.

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[1] Muhammad ibn Ali al-Idrisi (1876–1920) was head of the Abu Harish family and controlled the area and many tribes of present-day Yemen and the coastline between Tihama and the north, up to Akaba, trying to expand his power throughout Arabia and, for this reason, coming into conflict with the Sherif of Mecca. Idrisi, throughout the First World War, remained a constant thorn in the side of the British strategies in Arabia: they had him as an ally, at least nominally, but they feared his hegemonic thrust.

[2] Unsigned. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 18, 5 September 1916. The addition, attributed to Lawrence, commented on a report on the availability of labour in the occupied territories of Mesopotamia, compiled on the basis of 'records in the C.P.O.'s Office'. The attribution to Lawrence, as well as for the unmistakable style, stands out not only because the evaluations are based, as is easy to see, on the work carried out as an archaeologist in Carchemish, but also because traces of it are found in *Twenty-seven articles* at No. 90 in this book.

A way of bettering this case in country districts, is by enlisting the help of the peasant farmer or his sons; but this is precisely what is most difficult to do. Their labour (when you get it) compares well with almost any other in quantity and in quality. Their intelligence is very quick, and ready to adapt itself to new occupations. Often they do not work well side by side with the lowest class, and sometimes are only to be attracted by establishing a fictitious hierarchy among the workmen, and sowing the superstition that certain jobs are more honourable, and therefore to be reserved for better families. If this desirable job can be one that sets the pace for the rest (as the pick in a digging gang) the ordinary workman will be pulled up to the level of his leaders.

In course of time the rise of the standard of living will probably throw out the smallest holders, and make them dependent on a day wage. They will then form a skilled-labourer class.

The actual handling of the men is not easy. It is usually successful in proportion as the men are in closer touch with their employer, and, therefore, a large European supervising staff is advisable. The happiest master is he who knows the names and relationship of all his men, for under such conditions the feudalism latent in the sedentary tribes attaches them to him; his ascendancy becomes not only personal, but almost instinctive, if he has a gift of humour to temper the necessary firmness, and enough humanity to be interested in his men off the works. In such case there is little they will not do for him.

Ridicule is the greatest weapon in the Europeans' armoury. To insult or to lay hands on a workman spoils the gang – and as fatal in the long run is a machine-made system, or anything approaching a 'coolie' standpoint. British private firms in the Arab provinces of Turkey have generally been conspicuous for the good relations existing between them and their employés – and the Germans have been at the other end of the scale. Indeed, it has often been due only to their assiduous cultivation of consular or government protection that the latter have been able to achieve large undertakings.

The actual figures of day-work in Mesopotamia seem good. In North Syria, under easier conditions, the Baghdad line used to reckon to get a cubic metre of cut and carry per man per day in normal to stiff soil. A British undertaking, under close supervision, in the same district, with 300 men and a thirty-yard carry, used to average a total of 700 cubic metres per day; but the majority of its men were of the landed peasant class.

Kurd labour, while more robust, proved rather stupid, and is more difficult to keep good-tempered. Large bodies of Kurds are almost sure to fall out with someone, or among themselves. They are less fastidious than the Arabs in a dirty job – like coaling. Turkish labour performs its daily duty, but in a hopeless way, and mechanically. It is very hard, indeed, to persuade it to an interest in what it does.

19. *Hejaz Narrative*[1] (5 September 1916)

There has been practically no news from the Hejaz since 30 August. Steps are being taken to deal with Hussein ibn Mabeirig of Rabegh, who has been holding up stores and arms landed there, for the forces under Sherif Feisal.

Three deserters from the Turkish forces at Medina, who left there about a month ago report that they belonged to the Yemen Mofraza, a batch of recruits formed into the shape of a regiment (under Khaira Bey, an Arab), and sent from Constantinople to Damascus for the Yemen AC. Their route from Damascus (where they stayed for four months) was to have been Medina, Mecca, and then by land to the Yemen. They did not know where the Yemen was. There was a preponderance of Turks among the recruits when they started, but they went sick with the heat all along the way. One 'company' which left Damascus 130 strong, marched out of Medina to fight only eighty strong. The remaining fifty were Turks down with heat in the hospital at Medina.

The railway journey from Damascus took four days and four nights continuous travelling, with no longer stop than three hours, and generally not stopping more than ten or fifteen minutes. They had two engines from Deraa to Maan, and one afterwards. (This would be accounted for by the Amman gradients.) The train was of from ten to fifteen box-wagons, and two companies (about 300 men) with their baggage, and officers filled it. The wood fuel was carried mostly on the tender, from stores filled in various stations. Besides the main supplies from the Amanus and Taurus Wood Contract Company (Saghiz and Co.), local fuel was being collected by the Beduin. This consisted of the thicker stem of the thorn, broom, tamarisk and acacia of the desert. (Miserable fuel for an engine, and not much of it.)

On most stations were about ten men guarding the line: other soldiers were in working gangs, doing repairs and improvements. There was a larger garrison at Maan, and at Tebuk. When they reached Medina (which was just before the war there began, presumably at the end of May) there were few men there, only some battalions long in the Hejaz (probably two battalions of the 130th Regiment and a train battalion). Basri Pashi was military governor. Fakhri Pasha came down later.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 18, 5 September 1916. Unsigned but attributed what is reported here on the basis of the handwritten annotation present in the copy of the *Arab Bulletin* owned by Lawrence.

After hostilities began between Sherif Feisal and the Turks many more troops came down. They thought they were perhaps as many as 10,000 in all, but none of them knew how big a number above 1,000 is, and could not judge.

They were in Awali themselves, and orders came to withdraw from it at night. They then presumably deserted in the dark. They were captured by Arabs and kept for a fortnight, robbed of all they had, and threatened with death to persuade them to join the Sherif's forces. They refused. One of them liked the Turks, and the others said 'Our four brothers are in the Turkish Army at Medina. We do not want to make them run the danger of killing us.' So they refuse to do anything, and were sent down to Yanbo where they got on board a cruiser.

20. *Note*[1] (16 October 1916)

The failure of the Turks to effect an advance on Mecca before or during the pilgrimage has ensured the safety and success of the Egyptian and other pilgrimages which attended the annual ceremonies under the Sherif's protection. The moral effects of this should be to enhance very considerably the prestige of the Sherif among all those peoples who sent representatives to the Holy City.

The military sitution, must, however, remain critical as long as so large a Turkish force remains intact south of Medina, and as long as this force can obtain reinforcements and supplies from Syria by means of the Hejaz railway.

For the moment the holding of Rabegh contributes an effective bar to any contemplated advance on Mecca, as the Sultani road still represents the only practicable road along which there is sufficient water for a large force. Very soon, however, the autumnal rains will render the inland route or routes possible for the advance of a flying column.

The Turks are not likely to abandon their attempts to re-take Mecca until they are either effectively cut off from Syria or utterly defeated in the field. They naturally regard the possession of Mecca as indispensable to their otherwise shadowy claim to the Khalifate, and are certain to sacrifice strategic consideration to the attainment of what they regard as a paramount political objective. The denial of Mecca to the Turks is a vital blow to the position and pretentions of the CUP [Committee of Union and Progress], as well as an essential to the growing prestige of the Sherif.

The maintenance of the Sherif's present position has, in addition, the military importance of preventing the Turks reinforcing or maintaining their three immobilised divisions in the Asir and the Yemen. It prevents the Turks moving on the flank of the Suez Canal by using the Arabian coast as a base of either operations or propaganda, and engages a Turkish force badly needed elsewhere by its German masters in a theatre where the very existence of hostilities is a menace to their moral and political authority in Syria and Mesopotamia, as well as in Arabia.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 26, 16 October 1916. The note, unsigned but unanimously attributed to Lawrence, is placed at the bottom of the *Hejaz* little chapter. From the context it is clear that the long debate on whether to land contingents of British or French regulars in Rabegh had begun.

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21. *Wilson to Gray*[1] (16 October 1916)

Sir, I have the honour to report that Sherif Abdullah Bey arrived at Jeddah on October 16th. As Mr. Storrs C.M.G. was arriving that morning I postponed my call on Abdullah Bey's camp (about 11½ miles outside the town) about 11am and remained to luncheon. The talk was on general subjects and a meeting was arranged for 4pm at the British Consulate. At this meeting which was attended by Mr Storrs and Captain Lawrence of the Intelligence Department, I opened the proceedings by the reading of the message contained in H.E. the Sirdar's telegram No. 439 dated October 15th [...] Wilson Lt. Colonel"

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22. *Lawrence to Parker*[2] (24 October 1916)

Colonel Parker

I sent you off a hurried note last night, with a request from Faisal for a field-gun battery. F. is a very impatient general, who is very intelligent, and understands things well. Only I am afraid that some day he will get wild, and spoil the whole show, by trying to go too fast. It's a pity as he is a very nice fellow.

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[1] Signed and dated. Registered with the Foreign Office, no. P 5195-293. The dispatch (repertory 'no. 9') was sent from Jeddah on 3 November 1916 to Edward Grey (1862–1933) Viscount Fallodon, Foreign Secretary from 1905 to 1916. Gray had been the signatory, for Great Britain, of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The Sirdar telegram informed the Arabs that England could not send aeroplanes to Hejaz and that the contingent of French troops that were to land in Rabegh to help the insurgents could not be ready for a month. Abdullah was also informed, Lawrence present, that the British artillery requested by the Arabs had been shipped from England but that it was not possible to say when they would arrive. Only a few old howitzers would arrive in mid-November 1916. Ronald Amherst Storrs (1881–1955) was Secretary of Oriental Affairs in Cairo and in 1917 he became Political Officer of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and Governor of Jerusalem (see *Seven Pillars*, Chapter VI).

[2] Handwritten letter signed, by Hamra, dated 'Hamra, Oct. 24' Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Chevallier Parker (1874–1935) was one of the most prominent figures in the diplomatic-military background of the Arab War. He was Kitchener's nephew. In his diaries he quotes exactly what Lawrence says: 'Ali Bey gave me a letter [26 October 1916] from Lawrence dated 23rd at Faisal's camp and recommending a field battery complete to Yanbo.' See *The Diaries of Parker Pasha*, edited by H.V.F. Winstone, London, 1983, pp. 159, 161–4.

We are sitting at Hamra, which is in a bend of the Wadi Safra. Wadi Safra has about ten fairly large settlements, with water and palm trees, between Bedur and Khaif. It's very jolly here, in a palm-grove with a frame of granite, porphyry, and basalt hills on all sides. The country is incredibly difficult – impossible one might almost say – for movement outside the main wadis. A handful of men who knew their terrain could hold up an army.

For news: not much. Faisal's main force is at Khaif – the same as at Jedida, sitting still. He himself proposes to go to Yanbo al Nakhl and thence to the Railway. The danger is that the Turks have now got their whole force on the Sultani road, and might be let through to Rabegh. By going off towards Hafira he may draw off a third of the force towards the north, and Abdullah may get as much towards the East. The Arabs will only serve in their districts, so to distribute their forces strengthens them. The Turks on the other hand follow a more normal law! If F. will only go slow for two months, till Aziz is ready, he may make himself as big as he desires.

We go off to Yanbo today: or at least to Bir Said. I am still counting on reaching Yanbo on the 29th to catch the Lama. It is about 12½ hours actual travel from here, so that I have some in hand. Of course I would like to run across to Nakhl Yanbo, and so to the port. It does not look as though this would be possible. I am usually introduced as a Syrian officer.

Faisal says he has just heard good news from the Billi, who are getting tired of Suleiman Rifada. I hope it is true. Also the Faqir are said to be coming round.

The Egyptians are rather on my conscience. They are on bad terms with the people here. F. has a little ADC, Malud, who is rather a nosey sort of ass, and has upset them. F. himself can find no use for the Egyptian. They turned up at Bir Abbas with their pop-guns and failed to silence a six-inch howitzer. So he turned them down. He wishes he had not got them, and I rather agree with him. If I can persuade him to send them all back to Yanbo or Rabegh it will be better for them and for us. Hassan Zeki Bey is a poor creature; someone with far more strength of mind and drive should be in his place. He only make(s) faux pas and lays himself open to troubles. The tribesmen here seem pretty cheerful. There is a lot of very strong feeling against the Turks abroad!

It took me 26½ hours riding to get here; and Hamra is, I think, a little S.W. of where the 500,000 (WO map) puts it. Total distance 90–100 miles. Yanbo is only about 12 hours camel from here. I have made a number of alterations in the map, though, as we thought, the original traverse of the Sultani road is good. It is the districts off the road that we have got all wrong.

About road surfaces. On the 1/500,000, which you have probably now received (copy to Nuri and Aziz please) you may call the Rabegh-Mastura patch good. The soil is usually shingle like central Sinai, with occasional patches of scrub and blown-sand in hollows. The sand is usually shallow, and could, I think, always be avoided by bearing to E or W. Armoured cars should be able to work from sea-shore to the foothills. The first little hills on parallel 23 are annoying. Cars would probably be able to turn them on the W. They are lava, and the road across the neck, as marked, is stony by nature, and has had cairns added to it, The brush-wood does not give much ground-cover. The 'narrow sandy path' and foothills near Mastura I did not see. A force coming against Rabegh would have to water at Mastura, and there is nothing beyond to Bir al Shaikh. The water at Mastura is small in quantity – in a stone well about 20 feet deep. This might be blown in if a Turkish advance took place. The water supply at Khuraiba should be examined, with a view to possible destruction if necessary. From Mastura northward the hills between the Sultani road and the sea do not exist; that is they are so low as not to be worth marking. The road surface is like that S. of Mastura, only more sandy and more stony patches. An armoured car might do it, and a light car certainly would. It would be slow and bad for the tyres. The hills on the Sultani road at S.U.L., 7 SW of Bir al Shaikh turn back to a range that joins the T of Sultani to the isolated hill S. of W. of Wadi Safra. The Sultani road goes nearer the T than marked, and then turns E. of Bir al Shaikh. The run down to Bir al Shaikh is soft and sandy, and I don't think a car would do it. At Bir al Shaikh is a brushwood village of the Bani Salem Harb. From Bir al Shaikh to Bir ibn Hussain the road at first mounts a sand slope which would be rather a problem. From the N. of Sultani the surface is good. Bir ibn Hassain (Hassani) I saw at dawn, when it looked splendid. Jabal Subh, which runs on the E. of the road from Bir al Shaikh to Bir al Shofia, is a very sharp and jaggy range of peaks. Wasta is just S. of Kharma, and with Hamra is W. of where we put it. This brings Wasta into W. Safra. S. of Wasta there is the Arab Jedaida. The Turkish Jedaida is called Khaif. So Jedaida should be erased between Hamra and Bir Abbas, and the distance between those places greatly increased. T.E.L.

PS. If F. goes off to Yanbo before proper steps are taken to replace him here he is running a very serious risk. Ali or Aziz should move to Bir ibn Hassani before he goes.

23. *Translation of the letter from Sherif Feisal*[1] (26 October 1916)

Al-Hamra
28th Hegga, 1334. [26 October 1916]
My Lord and Master Ali Bey,

After kissing your noble feet, I acknowledge receipt of your noble order, sent with Abdel Aziz Yadi. Its intimations were understood and especially what you have mentioned about your marching [here erased: movement], because I want to know seriously. I beg you to be very careful, because it is quite evident that if the movement should not be in combination, then the result will not be good. Therefore, I beg that you should make all possible arrangements concerning your movements; otherwise you had better not start from Rabegh unless my lord, Abdullah, starts from Mecca, and he should start four or five days before you start. When he arrives at El Hijrieh, you can march; and you must divide your forces into two; the smaller part of the two say about 300 or 400 dromedary men under the command of one of the family should go to El-Milaf, where Ahmed ibn Mansur is, and there he will have all Sobh, Zebeid, Beniyum, and Beni Mohammed with him, and will defend the place (El-Milaf), and Beni Salem will follow those in El-Sidada as I told them. The second division which is the general force [here erased: or camp], must march as soon as possible towards the Farea road and camp at Mijaz, and cut the communication of the line of the enemy at El Ghayir to threaten Medina; and I, myself, am going North to cut the railway line and besiege Medina, by the will of God. I am awaiting your reply to Bir Said, and you must inform me:

1. About the number of your forces.
2. About the number of Abdulla's forces.
3. About the time of Abdulla's start, and with how many men.
4. About the day of your start.

I shall advance before you in order to attract the attention of the Turks, so that it will be easy for you to advance.

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[1] Dated typescript, registered as FO 882/19 AB/16/48. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 29, 8 November 1916. Unsigned. The translation of Feisal's letter to Sherif Ali, Sherif Hussein's eldest son, is Lawrence's first contribution to the *Arab Bulletin* reported by his brother Andrew in his 1939 edition of secret dispatches, with the heading 'Oct. 24, T.E.L. and Feisal'. The letter, translated by Lawrence, was sent with the original by Abdullah to Lieutenant Colonel Wilson for transmission to Cairo. Wilson forwarded it with the annotation 'I told to Abdulla the best thing he could do was to get to Rabegh as soon as possible. C.W. 1.11.16' and with the footnote: 'The original Arabic is to be returned to Abdulla' (registered as P/5195/1916). It should be noted that, in the whole mass of the texts of the war against the Turks in Arabia, Feisal is the only one to use the correct term 'dromedary' instead of the common 'camel' with which we are mistakenly accustomed to indicate the typical mount of the desert.

There is another idea which is that you may attract their (Turks) attention towards (yourself) and may wait for two or three days, and then I will advance quickly to destroy the line. I am awaiting your reply and information. At any rate, one of the members of the family, either Zeid or Sharaf, must be sent to El Milaf. Were it not for the movement of Juheina, I would have gone there myself. God willing, my stay will be at Buat or El Jafr. I am awaiting your immediate orders, my lord.
Your slave, Feisal.

Note: The original Arabic is to be returned to Abdulla.

Note by Arab Bureau:
All places mentioned above will be found on the map *Medina-Mecca Provisional Sheet* (N.B. *El Hijreah* is *El Hagaria* on the Easternmost road: *Buat – Buait* and *El Jafr*, probably *Hafira*, both on Hejaz Railway), with the exception of *Milaf* and *Sidada*.

The tribes: *Subh* and *Zobeid* are well known Harb section, from near Bir El Hosani, and the coastal region respectively; *Beni Yuh – Beni Jahm*, a Shiah section of Harb from the East country, *Beni Mohamed* are another section from central Hejaz; *Beni Salim* ditto.

"Movement of Juheina"? Feisal is in the Juheina country at Bir Said, and the phrase suggests trouble with that tribe, which has been acting with the Sherif since August.

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24. *Wilson to Edward Grey*[1] (25 October 1916)

That the Sherif and his sons have no love for the French appare to be true. Colonel Brémond does not appear to have much for them, as he informed

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[1] Despatch registered as 'n. 10', signed, with no record number. Report sent, from Jeddah, to Edward Grey. Here Wilson informed about the status of the mission led by Colonel Edouard Brémond (1868–1948), the French political-military officer in the Hejaz. France did not look favourably on the Arab Revolt and Brémond repeatedly tried to spoil relations between England and Hussein. The deterioration of relations between Wingate, Wilson, Lawrence and Brémond is witnessed by the telegram sent by Mark Sykes just five months later, which read: 'May 8th, 1917. No. 497. *Secret*. Following for Graham from Sykes n. 23, begins: I am convinced after careful study of situation at Wej and Jeddah that the sooner French Military Mission is removed from Hedjaz the better. French officials are without exception anti-Arab and only serve to promote dissention and (group undecypherable) grow worse and worse. Their line is to crab British operations to Arabs, throw cold water on all Arab actions and make light of the King to (two groups undecypherable) both. They do not attempt to disguise that they desire Arab failure. Without assistance I do not believe Picot will be strong enough to carry the day although he has made representations to Paris. I suggest therefore that French military mission in Hedjaz has now fulfilled its purpose, French contingent having absorbed troops at Suez and that it should be brought to an end. I find my chief difficulty in improving feeling between Arab and French due to deliberately perverse attitude and policy

Mr. Storrs and myself that he did not trust either the Sherif or Abdulla and thought it possible that the Sherif had a secret understanding with the Turks, an opinion I do not agree with at all. [. . .] A correct grasp of the situation with Faisal Bey should be possible on return of Captain Lawrence from the former's camp. [. . .] Wilson Lt. Colonel.

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25. *The Sherifs*[1] (27 October 1916)

One can see that to the nomads the Sherif and his three elder sons are heroes. Sherif Hussein (Sayedna as they call him), is outwardly so gentle and considerate as to seem almost weak, but this appearance hides a deep and crafty policy, wide ambitions and an un-Arabian foresight, strength of character and persistence. There was never any pan-Arab secret society in Mecca, because the Sherif has always been the Arab Government. His influence was so strong in the tribes and country districts, as to be tantamount to administration; and in addition he played Arabs' advocate in the towns against the Turkish Government.

Particularly have his tastes and sympathies been always tribal. The son of a Circassian mother, he is endowed with qualities foreign to both Turk and Arab, but he determined to secure the hearts of the nomads by making his sons Beduins. The Turks had insisted that they be educated in Constantinople, and Sherif Hussein agreed most willingly. They have all had a first-class Turkish education, and profit by their knowledge of the world. However, when they came back from Constantinople as young Levantines, wearing strange clothes and with Turkish manners, Sherif Hussein at once made them change into Arab things, and rub up their Arabic. He gave them Arab companions, and a little later sent for them, to put them in command of some small bodies of Arab camel corps, patrolling the pilgrim roads against the Auf. The young Sherifs fell in with the plan, as they thought it might be amusing, but were rather dashed when they were forbidden to take with them special food, or bedding, or saddle cushions, and still more when they were

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followed by Colonel Brémond and his staff which is in no way minimised by Monsieur Picot's advent. (Ends.)' In fact, Brémond was removed and returned to France. In 1931 he published *Le Hedjaz dans la Guerre mondiale*, in which he reconstructed the events of the Arab Revolt from his point of view, above all to contrast and weaken the importance of Lawrence.

[1] Typescript (pp. 1–3), autographed and dated 'Yenbo 27/10/1916'. Record no. FO 882/5 HRG/16/57 (pp. 39–41 according to the archive numbering). Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 32, 26 November 1916 with the title 'Personal Notes on the Sherifial Family' and with some variants. Here I followed the original typescript. These biographical profiles of the Sherifs were reprinted verbatim in the volume *Personalities, Arabia*, Admiralty War Staff Intelligence Division, April 1917, IOR/L/PS/20/C131. See also Chapters VIII, X and XII of *Seven Pillars*.

not given permission to come to Mecca for the feast, but had to spend all the season out in the desert with their men, guarding the roads day and night, meeting nomads only, and learning to know their country and their manners.

They are now all thorough Beduins, and as well have from their education the knowledge and experience of Turkish officials, and from their descent that blend of native intelligence and vigour which so often comes from a cross of Circassian and Arab blood. This makes them a most formidable family group, at once admired and efficient. It has, however, left them curiously isolated in their world. None of them seems to have a confidant or adviser or minister: and it is doubtful whether any one of them is fully intimate with another or with their father, of whom they all stand in awe.

Sidi Ali. Short and slim, looking a little old already, though only 37. Slightly bent. Skin rather sallow, large deep brown eyes, nose thin and a little hooked, face somewhat worn and full of lines and hollows, mouth drooping. Beard spare and black. Has very delicate hands. His manners are perfectly simple, and he is obviously a very conscientious, careful, pleasant, gentleman, without force of character, nervous and rather tired. His physical weakness makes him subject to quick fits of shaking passion with more frequent moods of infirm obstinacy. Apparently not ambitious for himself, but swayed somewhat too easily by the wishes of others. Is bookish, and learned in law and religion. Shows his Arab blood more than his brothers.

Sidi Abdulla. Aged 35, but looks younger. Short and thick built, apparently as strong as a horse, with merry dark brown eyes, a round smooth face, full but short lips, straight nose, brown beard. In manner affectedly open and very charming, not standing at all on ceremony, but jesting with the tribesmen like one of their own sheikhs. On serious occasions he judges his words carefully, and shows himself a keen dialectician. Is probably not so much the brains as the spur of his father: he is obviously working to establish the greatness of the family, and has large ideas, which no doubt include his own particular advancement. The clash between him and Feisal will be interesting. The Arabs consider him a most astute politician, and a far-seeing statesman: but he has possibly more of the former than of the latter in his composition.

Sidi Feisul. Is tall, graceful, vigorous, almost regal in appearance. Aged 31. Very quick and restless in movement. Far more imposing personally than any of his brothers, knows it and trades on it. Is as clear-skinned as a pure Circassian, with dark hair, vivid black eyes set a little sloping in his face, strong nose, short chin. Looks like a European, and very like the monument of Richard I, at Fontevraud. He is hot-tempered, proud and impatient, sometimes unreasonable, and runs off easily at tangents. Possesses far more personal magnetism and life than his brothers, but less prudence. Obviously very clever, perhaps not over-scrupulous. Rather narrow-minded, and rash when he acts on impulse, but usually with enough strength to reflect, and then exact in judgement. Had he been brought up the wrong way might have become a barrack-yard officer. A popular idol, and ambitious; full of dreams and the capacity to realise them, with keen personal insight, and a very efficient.

Sherif Zeid. Aged about 20. Is quite overshadowed by the reputation of his half brothers. His mother was Turkish and he takes after her. Is fond of riding about, and playing tricks. Has not so far been entrusted with any important commission, but is active. In manner a little loutish, but not a bad fellow. Humorous in outlook, and perhaps a little better balanced, because less intense, than his brothers. Shy.

TEL
Yenbo, 27/10/1916.

26. *Feisul's Operations*[1] (30 October 1916)

In June, Feisul's first attack on Medina failed, partly because he was met by Kheiri Bey's troops – but more because his own men were short of arms and ammunition. The people of Awali, on whom he had relied to hold the water supply of Medina, went over to the Turks, out of fear, and were promptly butchered by them. The lost ground could not be recovered, and Feisul had to retire further and further till finally he came down to Yenbo and saw Colonel Wilson.

After this he was a little encouraged, and notified the Sherif that he could hold up the Turkish advance for 15 or 20 days, till a diversion was made by another road, or till reinforcements came to him – and ever since he has been fighting by himself on the Sultani Road. At first he drove in the Turkish outposts, and did them some damage, but then Fakhri himself came down to inspect, and increased the Turkish force at Bir Abbas to some 3,000 men. These pushed back Feisul into the hills. The Egyptian artillery had come up, and the Arabs had recovered confidence, but lost it again when they saw it was quite useless against the Turkish guns. No advantage was taken of its mobility, but it was used like field artillery against the Turkish pieces, of which one is said to have been a howitzer. The Egyptian shells never went near the Turks, but the latter by indirect fire nearly hit Feisul's tent, and terrified the Arabs beyond measure. Partly to prevent their utter demoralisation, but more, I think, because he was bored with his own obvious impotence, Feisul withdrew to Hamra, leaving only a covering force to act on the defensive in the hills. The Turks made no attempt to push forward after him.

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[1] Typescript (pages numbered from 1 to 10), autographed and dated 'Yenbo, 30 October 1916'. Record no. FO 882/5 HRG/16/57 (pp. 42–51). Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 31, 18 November 1916 with the title 'Extracts from a Report on Feisal's Operations' and with some variants. The text had also been partially edited by Lawrence's brother, Arnold, at the height of the first publication in 1939. Here I have followed the original typescript. See Chapters XIII, XV and XVI of *Seven Pillars*.

The effect of the fighting was to emphasise the Arab's silly regard for artillery. From Feisul down to the most naked of his men, they all swear "If we had had two guns we should have taken Medina" – for they will not appreciate that the Turks are not as foolish as themselves in this matter. I don't think they have ever been near taking Medina, as Feisul's forces are only a mob of active and independent snipers, but we have got to reckon with this artillery mania of theirs, and give them the guns necessary as tokens to restore their spirits.

Feisul from Hamra proposes to retire to Bir Said for a few days, and then devote his personal attention to the Hejaz railway, the primary importance of which he is beginning to recognise. He will, however, not entertain the idea of cutting it by surprise, by small raiding parties, but wishes to take the Juheinah army, now at Tareif and Kheif Hussein (2,500–3,000 men), and make a grand assault on Buwat and Bir Nasif. He does not want to do this till Abdullah is approaching Medina on the eastern road, and till Ali or Zeid, or Sherif Shakir has reinforced Sherif Ahmed el-Mansur (Feisul's successor), on the Sultani road.[1] His idea is to distribute the Arab forces – each of which is available for service only in its own tribal district – as widely as possible, partly so as to raise the maximum number of men, and partly to break up the present Turkish concentration of almost all their force at Bir Derwish, which, as a common point of the Ghayir (Fura), Gaha and Sultani roads, threatens Rabegh unpleasantly.

The difficulty in the way of the combined scheme seems to me to be the faulty inter-communication inevitable, till we have provided field wireless sets for the H.Q. of each army.

It is, of course, hardly safe to prophesy, but I think that if the scheme works out, the Turks may have to retire from Bir Derwish to Medina, and to allot most of their present force to the duty of guarding their railway communications; and if the railway is cut, and kept cut, Medina may fall more quickly than is expected, as its civil population is reported to be already short of food, in spite of the date harvest being only just in. The locusts and the needs of the troops have caused a shortage. The railway is at present very insufficiently guarded.

If the plan fails, the next move is with the Turks. After what I have seen of the hills between Bir Abbas and Bir ibn Hassani, I do not see how, short of treachery on the part of the hill tribes, the Turks here can risk forcing their way through. The hills are not so high, and there is a good deal of water in the valleys, but the beds of these valleys are the only practicable roads, and they take the nature of chasms and gorges for miles, of an average width of perhaps 200 yards, but sometimes only 20 yards, full of turns and twists, without cover, and flanked on each side by pitiless hills of granite, basalt and porphyry; not bare slopes, but serrated and split and piled up in thousands of jagged heaps of fragments as hard as metal and nearly as sharp. Over these cliffs the Arabs run barefoot, and they know hundreds of ways from one hill-top to another. The average range possible is from 200 to 300 yards, and at point-blank ranges the Arabs shoot quite well. The hill belt is a very paradise for snipers, and a hundred or two of determined men (especially with light machine-guns, capable of being carried by and uphill), should be able to hold up each road. To break the determination of the Arabs, the Turks have their artillery – and I do not see how that will help them much in the hills – their aeroplanes, which have not so far taken an active part in the fighting, but which appear to have reached Bir Derwish, and caused a panic by their mere rumour which may die off on acquaintance – and, best weapons of all perhaps, money and moral suasion. They are actually spending a good deal of money – some say £70,000 a month – and receive the most gratifying verbal assurances in exchange. I do not think these assurances have passed into action, except perhaps at Awaly, when the outcome gave little encouragement to Arab participation on the Turkish side in future. They have a few Juheinah with them, and some Billi near Wejh: but the only Arabs with the main Turkish army appear to be three hundred Shammar, sent by Ibn Rashid, and some Ageyl, mostly Medina townspeople. The latter do not do much fighting.

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[1] See the letter to Feisal translated by Lawrence at No. 23.

The tribes taking Turkish money are mostly in touch also with the Sherif, and from what I could see the Sherif's is by far the most profitable and popular side at present. Not only does he spend more, but Feisul has made arrangements for rewards for booty taken; thus he pays £1 per Turkish rifle, and gives it back to the taker, and pays liberally for captured mules, or camels, or Turks.

Other things being equal, the Arab side will always have a definite preference, for sentimental reasons. Today the Turks are feared and hated by the Arabs, (except by such tribes as have been corrupted by the influence of Hussein Mabeirig), and the Sherif is generally regarded with great pride, and almost veneration, as an Arab Sultan of immense wealth, and Feisul as his War Lord. His cause has for the moment reconciled the inter-tribal feuds, and Feisul had Billi, Juheinah, and Harb, blood enemies, fighting and living side by side in his army. The Sherif is feeding not only his fighting men but their families, and this is the fattest time the tribes have ever known; nothing else would have maintained a nomad force for five months in the field. The fighting men in the Hejaz include anyone strong enough to hold a gun, between the ages apparently of 12 and 60.

Most of the men I saw were young. They are a tough looking crowd, all very dark-coloured, and some negroid: as thin as possible, wearing only a loose shirt, short drawers, and a headcloth which serves for every purpose. They go about bristling with cartridge-belts, and fire off their rifles when they can. They are learning by practice to use the sights. As for their physical condition, I doubt whether men were ever harder. Feisul rode 12 days' journey in six with 800 of them, along the eastern road, and I have had them running and walking with me in the sun through sand and over rocks for hour after hour without turning a hair. Those I saw were in wild spirits, as quick as hawks, keen and intelligent, shouting that the war may last for ten years, and screeching 'Allah yinsur el Din'[1] whenever they get to close quarters with the Turks, as they generally do; for on account of their fear of artillery all fighting has been taking place at night. These fights are rather quaint contests of wits, for the crowning piece of abuse, after the foulest words in their language have been sought out, is when the Turks in frenzy call the Arabs 'English', and the Arabs call the Turks 'Germans'! The Arabs take a number of prisoners, and some Syrians and others have deserted. The Turks cut the throats of all their prisoners with knives, as though they were butchering sheep. This fact depresses the Egyptian artillerymen, and perhaps we might arrange them preferential terms if they get captured by the Turks.

I wandered about amongst the Arab soldiers by myself a good deal, to hear what they were saying. They usually took me for a Turk, and were profuse in good-humoured suggestions for my disposal. The only other theme of their talk was artillery, artillery, artillery, the power and terror of which they have on the brain. The report of the coming of the 5 inch Howitzer to Rabegh nearly restored the balance of their last retreat from Bir Abbas in their own minds. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that the Beni Amr (who has been weakened by Hussein Mabeirig's action), asked Sidi Feisul, when he retreated, if he now intended to make peace with the Turks, and received an indignant reply. I think most of the tribes (whose casualties have been almost nil), would regret peace at present, though perhaps the townspeople, who do not favour the Sherif, would welcome it.

If the Turks increase their force, and pass to the offensive, there are several courses open to them. They might invade the Tihama through the hills by the Sultani road, if the tribes break down. Such a move might be very dangerous for them, for one could never feel quite sure that the tribes would not collect again (the Rahala, particularly concerned, seem to be Feisul's best fighters), and it would almost be worse to have such hills behind one, across one's communications, than in front, to carry by assault. The Turks only own the ground they stand on, and can never neglect their flanks, till they have the tribes on their side. Also by the Sultani road they are brought down into the Tihama, where water and food are both scarce, and long camel trains will be necessary. It might be worth while keeping sea-planes and perhaps a few armoured cars at Rabegh, in case Fakhri did really come forward. It must remembered that the latter is an untried man under orders of Jemal Pasha, who is a headstrong fool: he is acting without German advice on the spot, against an enemy whom he probably despises – and such a combination might at any time give us a gift, such as should be the advance of the Turks into the Tihama, when we have organised the Rabegh force.

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[1] 'May God grant the victory to the Faith'; the transliteration is Lawrence's.

Another possible route towards Rabegh is by the central (Fura) road. Wadi Fura starts from near Ghayir, up to which the Turks have been smoothing the track from Bir Derwish. From Ghayir it runs down with half a dozen oases of palms and water to Bir Ridwan, and thence to Khoreiba, which is three hours inland of Masturah. It is the most direct route from Medina to Rabegh, and the best watered, but for some reason was not used by the Haj. I could get no details about its surface.

It must also be remembered that the rains begin in November, and may continue intermittently till January. In the rocky country no moisture soaks in, so wadis run in flood very quickly, and pools are formed everywhere. This works both ways, for while there is plenty of water for two months, you may find your road a chest-deep roaring torrent in three minutes. In the matter of water though, what has impressed me in the Hejaz apart from the Tihama which is always parched, is not its scarcity, but its comparative abundance, and this at actually the dryest season of a year whose preceding rains were very small.

Another possible Turkish course, and perhaps their wisest, in view of the danger to the railway, is to proceed with a gradual pacification of the Hejaz from north to south. The action of Basri Pasha in going to Wejh may be the first step in such a course, by confirming the Billi in their allegiance. The Sherif has forbidden the Billi his markets, and they are in the greatest straits for food. He is also in communication with most of the sheikhs, and is fanning discontent against Suleiman Rifada, to whom he has sent a 20 day ultimatum (expiring about Nov. 15), threatening him with the fate of Hussein Mabeirig. The Billi are very anti-foreign, and much annoyed with the German-Turk alliance. A party of them in the Shefa have held up and kept a Turkish caravan, and Saad Ghoneim has increased his reputation by chasing a Turkish camel patrol into Wejh. At present it is a toss up which way the Billi go, and if they decide against the Turks it will make the subjugation of the Hejaz longer and more difficult.

If Basri Pasha succeeds in retaining the Billi his next step should be to detach the Juheinah from the Sherif.

They are newer subjects than the Harb, and should fall away the more easily, as economically they depend entirely on Wadi Yenbo for their existence. Wadi Yenbo runs from Yenbo up towards Buwat on the Hejaz railway, and in its lower course contains 24 oases of running water and palm gardens, with a population of perhaps 20,000, mostly slaves, who cultivate the land. The entire tribe of the Juheinah feeds on the produce of this valley, whose occupation, as it is surrounded by rather easy down country, seems a feasible operation for a considerable Turkish force. The Sherif would then be confined to the Hamra-Mecca area, and could no longer threaten the railway.

The next step would be the occupation of Wadi Safra, similar to, but smaller than, Wadi Yenbo, which is to the Beni Salem what Wadi Yenbo is to the Juheinah. By occupying Wadi Safra the Turks would ensure the extermination or submission of the Beni Salem, and would be in a position to make direct use of the disaffection caused by Sheikh Hussein.

This process seems to me a possible one for the conquest of the Hejaz, if the Arabs by working against the railway can frighten the Turks from an immediate advance down the Sultani or Fura roads. At the same time I do not think it can be done by force, by the Turkish troops now available, or by fraud on their present expenditure. On the other hand the news we picked up of the Turkish intentions looks as though they did mean to push through to Mecca: in which case either Wadi Fura is practicable, or they are, in my opinion, under-estimating the country with which they have to deal.

A thing which has struck me rather forcibly while in the Hejaz is the bigness of the revolt. Looked at from Egypt it loses some of its proportion, in our engrossment in the office telephones, and canal defense, and the comuniqués. Yet we have here a a well-peopled province, extending from Um Lejj to Kunfida, more than a fortnight long in camel journeys, whose whole Nomad and semi-Nomad population have been suddenly changed from casual pilferers to deadly enemies of the Turks, fighting them, not perhaps in our manner, but effectively enough in their own way, in the name of the religion which so lately preached a Holy War against us, and fighting them with the full and friendly consciousness that we are with them and on their side. This has now been going on for five months, during which time they have created, out of nothing, a sort of constitution and scheme of government for the areas behind the firing line.

The beduin of the Hejaz is not, outwardly, a probable vehicle for abstract or altruistic ideas. Yet again and again I have heard from them about acts of the early Arabs, or things that the Sherif and his sons have said, which contain nearly all that the exalted Arab patriot would wish. They intend to restore the Sheria, to revive the Arabic language, and to rebuild the prosperity of the country. They believe that by liberating the Hejaz they are vindicating the rights of all Arabs to a national political existence, and without envisaging one state, or even a federation, they are definitely looking North, towards Syria and Baghdad. They do not question the indipendence of the Imam, or Ibn Saoud: they wish to confirm them ... but they want to add an autoctonous Syria to the Arab estate.

Above and beyond everything we have let loose a wave of anti-Turkish feeling which embittered as it has been by some generations of subjection may die very hard. There is among the tribes in the firing line a nervous enthusiasm common I suppose to all national risings. A rebellion on such a scale as this does more to weaken a country than unsuccessful foreign wars, and I suspect that Turkey has been harmed here more than it will be harmed elsewhere till Constantinople is captured and the Sultan made the puppet of European Advisers. The Yeni Turan[1] movement is keenly discussed in the Hejaz, where its anti-Arab and anti-Islamic character is well understood. The peace conference will I think see a demand from the Sherif (if by our assisting him actively in materials of war at present we prolong his resistance till then) for the transfer of the Holy Relics from Constantinople to Mecca, as a sign that the Turks are unworthy longer to be the guardian of such things.

The Arab leaders have quite a number of intelligent level-headed men among them, who if they do not do things as we would do them, are successful in their generation. Of course they lack experience – except of Turkish officialdom, which is a blind leader – and theory, for the study of practical economies has not been encouraged. However, I no longer question their capacity to form a government in the Hejaz, which is better, so far as the interests of the subjects are concerned, than the Turkish system which they have replaced. They are weak in material resources and always will be, for their world is agricultural and pastoral and can never be very rich or very strong. If it were otherwise we would have had to weigh more deeply the advisability of creating in the Near East a new power with such exuberant national sentiment. As it is, their military weakness which for the moment incommodes us (since by our denial of active help in men we have tacitly assumed the responsability of making good their material needs), should henceforward ensure us advantages immeasurably greater than the money, arms and ammunition we are now called upon to spare.

TEL
Yenbo
30th October 1916

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[1] An ultra-nationalist political movement which took its name from the eponymous title of the novel by Halide Edib Adivar (1884–1964). It advocated a rebirth and a union of the so-called Turanian peoples (from the Baltic Sea to Japan) who shared a common Finno-Ugric linguistic origin. Turkish nationalism took it over to use it against the Arabs and also to initiate the large-scale elimination of the Armenians.

27. *Hejaz Administration*[1] (3 November 1916)

With the country in its present critical state of war, only the main outlines of the Sherif's administration have emerged. There is seen to be an opposition between town and country. The former continues under a simplification of the Ottoman system: the latter is becoming patriarchal, for the Sherif deals with the sheikhs direct as his officials, and does not hesitate to remove them and replace them by others of their family (as we are doing in Mesopotamia) when they prove unsatisfactory. Their authority and status as intermediaries between their tribesmen and the central power are being increased, by the Sherif, instead of sapped, as by the Ottoman system. Within the tribe of course, their rule is a nominal autocracy, so hedged about by tribal opinion and custom as to be little more than general assent in practice.

In the towns the Sherif has nominal governors, but often the real business is in the hands of an agent, who is his own man, but who has to act gently, to avoid arousing the jealousy of the less competent but great local man, who would be easily driven into the arms of the Turks. Strong men found the Turkish Government not uncongenial, for it allowed scope for partiality, and the Sherif seems by nature just.

The Turkish civil code has been abolished. In the towns the cadis administer the undiluted Sheria, and in the tribes matters are still to be settled by tribal law, with final reference to the Sherif or his Kaimmakam. The Sherif intends, when there is time, to extend the principles and scope of the Sheria to cover modern difficulties of trade and exchange!

The multiplicity of Turkish officials has been abolished. Most of the offices are working on a fraction of the old staff.

The Turkish system of internal taxation is in abeyance. These were only occasionally collected, and then by flying columns of gendarmes, and the vexation was greater than the profit. Also at present the manhood of the Hejaz is under arms, and so exempt from dues. The 10% ad valorem customs rate on imports, and the 5% on exports remains in force. In Jidda the yield is said not to be very great, as the Sherif's imports are so generous as to discourage private enterprise. At Yenbo the customs receipts average about £600 a month, and more than cover the salaries and public improvements now in hand.

The urban octroi is retained.

The police are usually the Sherif's own Bishawi retainers, and seem quiet and efficient – but the return to chthonic conditions has meant the restoration of tribal or family authority, and a great decrease in the exercise of the central government. Sherif Hussein is a student of Beduin polity and custom, and with his usual wisdom has silently sanctioned their restoration wherever it has retained its vitality. The higher government, in Arab areas, has always been an excrescence, only troubling the people when it touches them.

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[1] Typescript signed and dated 'Jeddah, 3/11/1916', with occasional autograph corrections, registered as FO 882/5, HRG/16/57 (pp. 52–55). Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 32, 26 November 1916 in a much abbreviated and much-reworked form, with the title 'The Sherif's Administration'. Here I have followed the text of the original typescript.

Finance.

The two ports, Jidda and Yenbo, probably each make a small profit of receipts over administrative charges. Mecca and the army are the two great expenses of the Hejaz government, and the actual cost of each it is not possible for me to estimate. At Mecca, the Imaret expenses before the war were £1,000 a month. They have since largely increased. In addition there are expenses in the town, and just now large charitable doles replace the diminished pilgrimage receipts.

On the army the expenditure is heavy. Dhelul riders (rikab) are paid £.2 a month, and £.4 or £.5 for their camel and its food. Arabs get about £.3 a month, and soldiers £.2 a month. All men are fed, and generally, their families as well.

The forces actually mobilised are continually shifting. A family will have a gun, and its sons will serve in turn, perhaps week by week, and go home for a change as often as replaced. Married men drop off occasionally to see their wives, or a whole clan gets tired, and takes a rest. For these reasons the paid forces are more than those serving, and this is necessary, since by tribal habit wars are always very brief, and the retention in the field of such numbers as the Sherif has actually kept together is unprecedented. Policy further often involves the payment to sheikhs of the wages of their contingent, and many such payments are little more than disguised bribes to important individuals.

Sherif Feisul receives a lump sum of £.30,000 a month from his father, and complete discretion. He keeps on foot about 8,000 men with this money (3,000 Sultani road and Hamra, 1,000 at Tareif, 800 near Bowat, 1,000 with Saad El Ghoneim, 2,000 at Kheif Hussein) and with the surplus (perhaps £. 6,000) is working on the cupidity of the more distant tribes. Representatives of the Fakir, the Billi and Nuri Shaalan were with him when I was there, and with them all were being arranged the foundations of a complete understanding of common action, when the Sherif's forces were near enough to lend efficient support.

Sidi Ali has no fixed allowance, but receives from Mecca what he asks for. He says it is not less than £. 25,000 a month, and has been £. 35,000. He keeps about 3,000 men with him, and has a large, but rather nebulous contingent watching the Ghayir, Fura, and other central roads.

Sidi Abdullah, as the Sherif's most politic son, has probably what money he wants, though since Taif fell he cannot have spent very much. He has now however a force of Ateibah, Harb and Meteir mobilised for action on the Eastern road.

On the whole, therefore, one may perhaps suggest for the Hejaz monthly budget:

Receipts.	*Expenses.*
H.B.M.G. £. 125,000	Mecca £. 5,000
Customs £. 3,000	Jiddah, etc. £. 2,000
Estates £. 5,000	Emirate £. 3,000
Sidi Ali £. 30,000	
Sidi Abdullah? £. 30,000	
Sidi Feisul £. 30,000	

leaving a balance of perhaps £.30,000, which represents probably closely what Sherif Hussein has to spend himself in presents and retaining fees to tribes sitting on the fence. It is therefore not likely that he makes any real economy in gold at present and one can see everywhere that money, and money only, is going to give us the breathing space necessary to equip the Arab armies for the taking of Medina.

The question of currency and exchange is going to be a little difficult shortly. The old confusion of sagh and chiruk – the official and popular estimate of the value of coins in piastres – has been increased by a patriotic attempt of the Sherif to depreciate the Turkish money. He has fixed the sovereign at 112 and the mejidie at 17 piastres, and has ordered the withdrawal of all worn coins.

The result has been a great shortage of silver. Indian silver (much used apparently in Jidda, and for export to square accounts) has risen, and Turkish silver fallen. There is a glut of gold.

It seems to me that someone should look into the question at Jidda and Yenbo and report on what sould be done. The establishment of a bank with facilities for Eastern exchange would probably much relieve the pressure; otherwise we may have a local fall in the value of the sovereign.

Indian paper seems to be acceptable at Jidda.

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28. *Military Notes*[1] (3 November 1916)

Sherifial Forces

(a) *Numbers.* I think to-day the Sherif has probably in all about 15,000 to 20,000 men mobilised. These are divided up in local forces, from Um Lejj to Kunfida. The largest bodies of men are probably the 3,000 formerly with Feisul, and those with Sherif Ali at Rabegh. Sherif Abdullah may have as many with him.

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[1] The whole of the following section, always registered as FO 882/5, HRG/16/57 (pp. 56–63), was published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 32, 26 November 1916 in heavily abbreviated and reworked form. I continue to follow the original typescript.

(b) *Composition*. With the exception of the Bishawi retainers and the 'soldiers' at Rabegh, these forces are entirely tribal. About 10% are camel corps and the rest infantry, some of whom are desert tribes, and some hill tribes. I did not see much (or think much) of the desert tribes, but the hill men struck me as good material for guerrilla warfare. They are hard and fit, very active, independent, cheerful snipers. They will serve only under their tribal sheikhs, and only in their home district or near it. They have suspended their blood feuds for the period of the war, and will fight side by side with their old blood enemies, if they have a Sherif in supreme command; except in exceptional circumstances they would not, I think, obey the orders of a man belonging to any other tribe. The lack of discipline – or rather of control – allows them to go home and see their wives and families when they please, if they produce a substitute; the personnel of the army thus changes incessantly; this is inevitable in tribal warfare.

There is a sheikh usually to every hundred or so men. He is paid their wages, and is responsible for their being fed, and ready for action in their stated strength when called upon.

(c) *Tactics*. The tribal armies are aggregations of snipers only. Before this war they had slow old muskets, and they have not yet appreciated fully the uses of a magazine rifle. They would not use bayonets, but enjoy cutting with swords. No man quite trusts his neighbour, though each is usually quite wholehearted in his opposition to the Turks. This would not prevent him working off a family grudge by letting down his private enemy. In consequence, they are not to be relied on for attack in mass. They are extremely mobile, and will climb or run a great distance to be in a safe place for a shot – preferably at not more than 300 yards range, though they are beginning to use their sights empirically. They shoot well at short ranges, and do not expend much ammunition when in contact with the enemy, though there is any amount of joy-firing at home. Feisal gives them fifty cartridges each, keeps a tight hold of his reserves, and prevents waste as far as possible.

The Arabs have a living terror of the unknown. This includes at present aeroplanes and artillery. The sound of the discharge of a cannon sends every man within earshot to cover. They are not afraid of bullets, or of being killed – it is just the manner of death by artillery that they cannot stand. They think guns much more destructive than they really are, but their moral confidence is probably as easily restored, as it is easily shaken. A few guns – useful or useless – on their side would encourage them to endure the Turkish artillery, and once they get to know it, most of their terror will pass. At present they fight only at night, so that the Turkish guns shall be blind.

(d) *Possibilities*. I think one company of Turks, properly entrenched in open country, would defeat the Sherif's armies. The value of the tribes is defensive only, and their real sphere is guerrilla warfare. They are intelligent, and very lively, almost reckless, but too individualistic to endure commands, or fight in line, or help each other. It would, I think, be impossible to make an organised force out of them. Their initiative, great knowledge of the country, and mobility, make them formidable in the hills, and their penchant is all for taking booty. They would dynamite a railway, plunder a caravan, steal camels, better than anyone, while fed and paid by an Arabic authority. It is customary to sneer at their love of pay: but it is noteworthy that in spite of bribes, the Hejaz tribes are not helping the Turks, and that the Sherif's supply columns are everywhere going without escort in perfect safety.

I do not think the tribal armies will break up unless:

(a) money runs short with the Sherif.
(b) the Turks occupy their home waters and palm-groves.
(c) they attempt a pitched battle (when their defeat and casualties would appal them).
(d) the Sherif loses his prestige as an exclusively Arab sovereign.

Turkish Forces

(a) *Numbers*. I am now a fortnight out from Egypt, so have no recent idea of the Turkish units in the Hejaz. These I was able to confirm from prisoners are 1 2/130, 2 3/42 (1/45? 1/55) 1 2/3 Yemen Mofraza, 1/Mohafiz, 2/Hajjana, 4/131, etc. With artillery this would mean about 15,000 men. I think the two armies are therefore about equal in numbers: though the Turkish force is concentrated, and the Arab force is excessively distributed.

A difference in character between the Turkish and Arab armies, is, that the more you distribute the former the weaker they become, and the more you distribute the latter the stronger they become. This point is now going to be made use of by the Sherifs.

(b) *Composition*. The Turkish forces contain 400 Arabs (Syrian) in the 1,400 of the 130th Regt., and about 200 Arabs in the 900 of the Mohafiz, and about 500 Arab (Ageyl) camel-men; also 300 Shammar tribesmen from Nejd. The rest of their men are Turks, and all infantry, except for 500 camel corps and a handful of cavalry.

Their composition renders them deficient in mobility, and the Shammar are the only light troops they possess capable of extended mounted raids; the latter will probably (being tribesmen) not remain very long.

(c) *Tactics*. The Turks have so far restrained themselves entirely to action in the plains, where they have the support of their artillery. They have not yet attempted to attack the hills.

(d) *Plans*. The Turks have plenty of food for the men; a shortage of hay, not much barley, enough water. They can allot 130 camels per battalion for the Bir Abbas force, and at the same time maintain their troops at Bir Derwish.

It is not easy to see why they have not advanced. Their cause is steadily losing ground among the tribes, who are also gaining experience in the new mode of fighting. It may be that the cholera at Medina is serious . . . or they may be short of the necessarily very large reserve of food required for an advance to Mecca; or they may be afraid of our landing forces at Rabegh.

They also know that as long as Feisul's army is in being – and it should be in being as long as he preserves its present elasticity and avoids a decisive action – their communications with a column advancing on Mecca from Medina would be almost impossible to keep open, without very greatly increased forces or a block-house system.

It would, I think, be quite possible for a small self-contained force to retake Mecca; and, if the tribes still kept their present determination, impossible to retain it.

Our part. The courses of action we may take to support the Sherif may vary between doing his work for him (by an occupation of the Hejaz Railway) and allowing the Turks time to prepare for his conquest (which has been the effect of our "military assistance" of the last months).

The Sherif's present forces are tribal volunteers. Their virtues are mobility and knowledge of the country, and therefore we cannot either increase their numbers (since that introduces a stronger element) or increase their baggage. To add to them foreign artillery units, like the Egyptian, is I think a mistake.

On the other hand these tribal forces, it they are to carry out their defensive role, must be strengthened by artillery, of a portable sort, and light machine-guns. These must be manned by themselves, that there may be no responsibility attaching to us for their failure. As many Lewis guns as are available at once, as a kind of sniper's accessory, and some batteries of mountain guns, to act as amulets to restore public confidence, are immediately required.

This tribal force will never finish the war (unless the Turks have not enough men to defend their railway) as it will never be capable of more than a defensive role.

We should utilise it as a screen behind which to build up for the Sherif a field force with good mobility, which shall be capable of meeting a Turkish force distracted by guerrilla tactics, and defeating it piece-meal.

This field force will have to be recruited from townspeople, slaves and villagers. Aziz El Masri says that a strength of 5,000 will be sufficient. They must be at least as well trained as the Turks, which will take some months, and they must have a liberal technical equipment.

It is proposed to form this field force ar Rabegh, which from the naval point of view is a convenient point, and where the presence of a Sherifial force is a necessity, so long as Hussein Mabeirig is at large.

It has been suggested that Rabegh should become more than a mere training centre: that it should be fortified and made a rallying point of the Sherifian armies in case of a Turkish advance.

This course will be desirable, perhaps, when there is a Sherifian force capable of defending an entrenched position. To-day there is none, for the tribesman will not sit still for a moment, and if they did would be smashed out of existence. At present if such an entrenched base is formed it would have to be defended by allied troops.

I do no think that there is really much religious antipathy to Christians landing in the Hejaz. On the Turkish side the religious cry would be used as a stick with which to beat the Sherif ... and on the Arab side it is used as an excuse to hide the really political objections to our coming. The Beduin cannot realise how unattractive we find the Hejaz, and believe that an armed landing by us is the prelude of eventual occupation.

As however their objection is political it does not in the least apply to the landing of technical units. Guns, machine-guns, wireless telegraphy, and aeroplanes are so many toys to the Arabs, who will be ovejoyed to welcome them and their exponents to their side. They fear the landing of an infantry force powerful enough to take armed possession of Rabegh, and I think if such were landed now that the opposition of the northern tribal forces to the Turks would weaken, till our Rabegh force bore the whole weight of the work.

Our objects in occupying Rabegh ourselves would probably be

(I) to encourage the Arabs: – this I think would follow from the landing of instructional and technical contingents, and the exact opposite would be the effect of the landing of a combatant force.

(II) to deny Rabegh wells to the Turks. This could, I suggest be done as easily, and probably more cheaply, by a monitor.

(III) to prevent a Turkish advance on Mecca. In this case the mere threat, or possibility of a future landing should be as effective as its present realisation. The Turks need not use Rabegh itself as a stopping place – Khoreiba is safer – but they could hardly go on towards Mecca without leaving a force in the neighbourhood strong enough to prevent our landing in their rear; – and at present their whole Hejaz army is not sufficient for this purpose alone.

Suggestions.

(I) That if the Turks advance now no attempt be made to hold Rabegh either by landing a foreign force, or by the present Sherifial tribal armies. (The question of employing The Sherifian field force there, after it has been created, may be left for consideration of the future [here erased: expeditions]).

(II) That the French contingent of technical troops, demolition instructors, bombing instructors, artillery and machine-gun instructors, wireless sets, armoured cars and aeroplanes, with any Moslem officers, N.C.O's, or men, from Egypt, or N. Africa, or E. Africa, or India, be sent at once to Rabegh, with technical equipment, to proceed to the training of the 2,000 soldiers already there, and that all possible recruits be added to their number (Arab prisoners of war in India).

(III) That the Navy be asked to provide a seaplane ship, and much gunships as they think advisable, to hamper and hinder a possible Turkish advance from Bir El Sheikh or Khoreiba on Rabegh: such ships also to embark or destroy the men, stores, and equipment of the Training camp at Rabegh in case of such Turkish advance.

(IV) That the tribal army be assisted in every way possible in its role of covering force for the Rabgeh camp. This tribal army to be maintained in its present position from Yanbo through Hamra and Bir ibn Hassein to Ghayir and Ghadir Rabegh, with flying columns harrying the railway, and Turkish communications.

The assistance required by this tribal army is:

(a) Money.
(b) Rifles.
(c) Food.
(d) Light machine-guns.
(e) Mountain guns.
(f) Any sort of guns.
(g) Aeroplanes reconnaissance.

The value of e, f, and g, is purely moral; it will cost us a certain amount, but not more than a and e ... and is quite as important in keeping the force in being.

The Hejaz war is one of dervishes against regular troops – and we are on the side of the dervishes. Our text-books do not apply to its conditions at all. It is the fight of a rocky, mountainous, ill-watered country (assisted by a wild horde of mountaineers) against a force which has been improved – so far as civilised warfare is concerned – so immensely by the Germans, as almost to have lost its efficiency for rough-and-tumble work.

TEL
Jidda
3/11/16

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29. *When Sherif Feisul was in Damascus*[1] (3 November 1916)

When Sherif Feisul was in Damascus he had 30 men only with him, and his advisers were terrified at his boldness. He went about and talked to everybody whether suspect or not, and openly criticised Jemal Pasha. Feisul said he did not care at all for the Ottoman Government, and if they went for him he would take his 30 men and ride out into the desert and fight them from there.

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[1] Undated and unsigned typescript, with occasional handwritten corrections, registered as FO 882/5 HRG/16/57 (pp. 64–5). The two pages of the document are registered and

However eventually he saw that his position was really dangerous, so he went to Jemal Pasha with a long complaint of the position at Medina. From Mecca to Medain Salih, he said, were the confines of the Emirate promised them by the Turks, and here was Basri Pasha in Medina as Mohafiah,[1] objecting to the continued presence there of his borther Sherif Ali, and countering his orders. Jemal was rather astonished to hear of all this, and wired to Constantinople for a copy of the Hejaz Firman.

Meanwhile Ali had been informed by messenger how matters stood, and had told Sherif Hussein, who at once sent 500 camel men to Medina, and a letter telling Ali to order Feisul back to take command of them. Feisul took these orders to Jemal Pasha, and received from him a staff officer to assist in training the volunteers. The 500 were only the advance guard of a large force promised by the Sherif for the Camel attack, if the promises of the Firman were fulfilled.

Feisul got down to Medina, and there carried on so boldly that his Staff got frightened, and bolted back to Damascus. A few days later Kheiri Bey's force began to arrive, and then came a wire saying that Fakhri Pasha was on his way. From this the Sherif saw that the Turks had taken the alarm.

When Fakhri arrived Ali and Feisul continued to stay in Medina, preparing for their rising. The Turks objected to Ali's continuing there, as they did not like him. In the end Ali came to them, and showed them a letter from Sherif Hussein which said that he was to come back to Mecca at once. The Turks were now busied in putting Medina in a state of defence, but were delighted with the news, especially as Feisul was to stay, and they hoped to hold him as hostage.

Ali duly rode off, and that same night Feisul went off with his 400 men, without being noticed. They met outside the town, and rode down towards Mecca one day, and then fetched a compass through Aar to the Railway line which they proceeded to cut.

Sidi Ahmed El Shems El Shingebi is living very quietly in a small house at Medina. He appears to have no money, but lives on cofee and dates. There are usually three or four Moghrebi students reading with him. He goes to the mosque on Friday only, where he has a special carpet, but takes no active part in the prayer.

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numbered in the same binder bound immediately after Nos. 42 and 43: the characteristics (including typing) of the typewriter used, like the handwritten corrections, confirm that the dating is the same as the two previous reports. References to the events narrated are also found in *Seven Pillars* in Chapter V.

[1] Military governor, in Arabic. Lawrence corrects by hand the proper spelling of the term.

He approached Sherif Ali, and represented to him that some Moroccan mujahidin whom he had urged to go to the Canal had been beaten for praying, not on parade where of course prayers were incongruous, but in camp. In his mind the Turkish Government by this and other acts (notably the execution of Emir Omar) had shown itself unworthy of the respect of civilised Mohammedans, and he urged the Sherif to revolt. He said that it would be necessary first to gain the support of England before taking action.

He seemed strongly anti-French, as of course are most of the Moroccan refugees in Turkey. The affair of the Consular archives has damaged French prestige very seriously in educated circles in Syria and elsewhere.

30. *Route*[1] (3 November 1916)

October 21. At 6 p.m. started off from Aziz Bey El-Masri's tent at Rabegh. Sidi Ali, Sidi Zeid and Nuri saw me off. I had Sidi Ali's own camel, with its very splendid trappings. This secured me a vicarious consideration on the way. The Abadilla wasm is the "secret sign" of the Port Sudan messengers.

Sheikh Obeid el-Rashid of the Hawazim Beni Salim Harb, and his son Abdullah came with me.

We marched through the palm-groves, and then out along the Tehama, the flat and featureless coastal desert of Arabia. The Sultani road runs along this for the first 50 miles.

At 7 p.m. we crossed a belt of blown sand and scrub, about 500 yards broad, but only about a foot deep. It could probably be circumvented, but it was too dark to see. After that between 7.30 and 8 p.m. crossed several similar but smaller sandy hollows, and at 9.20 p.m. a deeper one. At 9.30 we stopped and slept.

October 22. Got going again at 3 a.m. The same sort of country till 4 a.m. when we came to the foot of a very low stony ridge, which proved to be a narrow saddle of Harrah, joining a small flat block of Harrah near the sea to the main mass inland. I could not see how far off the sea was, but it is said to be only five or six thousand yards, and if so the place should be ranged for ship's fire. The neck crossed by the road is stony, and rather narrow, between low shoulders. It has been cumbered up by many tiny cairns, but it is not a difficult passage, except for low built cars, for which some of the larger stones would have to be rolled aside. By 4.45 a.m. we were across the ridge and had descended into the Masturah, which is really the delta of Wadi Fura. Bir Masturah is at the north bank of the wadi bed, which is a gravel and sand area, well covered with scrub and thorn trees up to 20 feet in height. It seems to extend for some 15 minutes west of the road, after which bare country extends towards the sea, and inland seems to run back for some two hours, and then contracts into the mouth of Wadi Fura, one hour up which is Khoreiba. Khoreiba may be a point of great importance, and should be examined. It is reported to contain wells, and a spring and running water, with palm groves.

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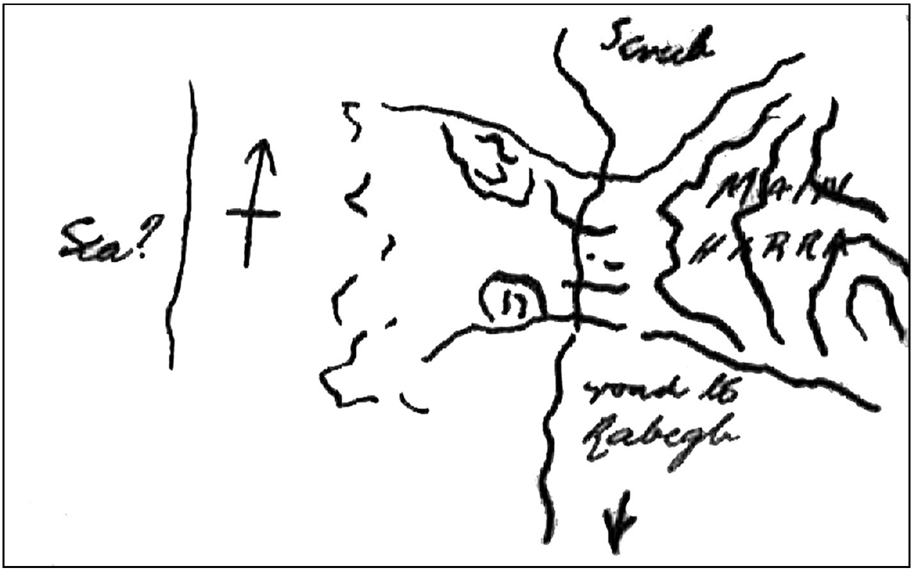
[1] Original typescript with handwritten corrections, initialled in autograph, registered as FO 882/5 HRG/16/57 (pp. 66–75). The pages of the manuscript are numbered from 1 to 10. The characteristics of the manuscript allow us to deduce that the date is 3 November 1916, which is moreover consistent with the conclusion of the diary. Published, with relevant omissions, in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 31, 18 November 1916, with the title 'Extracts from the diary of a recent trip' and the date 'Yenbo, 29 October' (absent in the original and obviously wrong) under the initials 'T.E.L.'. I followed the original typescript here. See *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XVI.

We reached Bir Masturah at 6.45 and stayed till 8 a.m. The well is stone-lined, and about 20 feet deep and 9 feet in diameter. On one side is a chimney (with hand and foot holes) running down to the water, which might be plentiful, if the well were clean. As it is the bottom is half full of stones. Forty yards south of the well is a rubble shelter, perhaps visible from the sea, and some reed huts for 3 or 4 families.

I think Masturah well might be prepared for demolition, if necessary. It would take the Turks a long time to re-open under gunfire from the sea, or seaplane observation – and there is no other water on the Sultani Road between Rabegh and Bir El Sheikh. The land surface from Rabegh to Masturah sould be possible for most wheeled traffic, though some cicumspection would be necessary, and going would be slow in parts. Armoured cars



Map of 'harra' ground (north of Rabegh) by T.E. Lawrence as included in the original handwritten report (No. 30).

should have considerable freedom of movement from Rabegh to Khoreiba and the sea, and I strongly recommend that one be sent on trial.

We left Bir Masturah at 8 a.m. and marched till 11 a.m., and again from 12.30 p.m. till 4 p.m. when the Sultani road leaves the Tehana towards the N.E. Till this point the going has been such as before, though it gets slowly worse for wheels, as the surface becomes softer. The ground is made up of chips of porphyry and basalt, set in sand, or sometimes of pure sand only, with a hard under soil. Thorn trees are not plentiful after Bir Masturah. Tareif Beni Ayub, a very steep and bare range of hills, stretches away on the east of the Tehana. It seems to be about 15 miles long, and rather narrow. North of it is a tangle of small rocky hills (covering much the same space) and then Jebel Subh, a great mass of rocks going up to beyond Bir Ibn Hassani. North of Jebel Subh is Jebel Gheidh. Jebel Radhwa is in sight to the N.W., and across the top of the Tehana, from near Ras El Abyadh (Rueis) from S.W. to E.N.E. runs a range of low hills (Jebel Hesna) as though to meet Jebel Subh. The Sultani road runs North up Wadi Hesna towards these hills; but we turned off N.E. at 4 p.m. by a short cut. Wadi Hesna was sand with much broom-like scrub, and it marked the beginning of an intermediate area, between the flat Tehana and the rocky hills of the interior. The underlying characteristics of this intermediate area were low basalt ridges, but nearly everywhere they are covered with sand, on which is a good deal of coarse grass and trees, and sheep and goats were grazing in the shallow valleys which drained S.E.

At 5 p.m. we passed a stone that marked the north boundary of the Masruh dira, and the south end of the Beni Salim. At 5.30 we rejoined the main road, and followed it down slopes of loose and rather heavy sand to Bir El Sheikh at 6 p.m. This is a Beni Salim village, with a short, broad street of brushwood huts and a few shops; also two stone-lined wells (said to be 30 feet deep) with plenty of good water. We left again at 9 p.m., and in the dark struck up more rough sandy slopes with some hard patches, trees, etc., till 12 p.m., when we slept.

October 23. Started again at 3 a.m., and followed down Wadi Maared between sharp hills. Many trees about. At dawn (5 a.m.) reached Bir ibn Hassani, at the junction of three great wadis. The confluence is about half a mile wide, of hard soil, and the village (where lives Ahmed el-Mansur, brother of Mohsin of Jiddah, and the Sherif's Emir El Harb) consists of about 30 stone houses. There are three wells. The Sultani road to Bir Abbas turns off to the N.E. up wadi Milif or Mreiga, which drains off S.W. as Wadi Milif, towards Bir El Sheikh and the sea.

Jebel Subh, just E. of Bir ibn Hassani, is fretted into the most fantastic shapes along the sky-line.

As we came by night I cannot say if cars would pass Bir El Sheikh. I think not, though the run down to Bir Ibn Hassani and the surface of the valleys there are quite excellent. The mountains are apparently impassable except for Arabs or birds.

At 6 a.m. we left Bir Ibn Hassani, turning N.W. up Wadi Bir Ibn Hassani. The country changed instantly, as we had reached the third zone of the Hejaz littoral, that in which sand hills give place to bare rocks. The hills on each side of the wadi were as steep as possible, perhaps 2,000 feet high, of dull red granite or porphyry with pink patches, but with foot hills, about 100 feet high, of a dark green rock, that gave the lower slopes a cultivated tint. There were many trees (acacia to 30 feet, sunt, etc.), and enough tamarisk and soft shrubs to make the view from a little distance most delightful, almost park like. The ground surface was of shingle and light soil, quite firm, with occasional rocky patches, and the valley was from 200 to 500 yards wide. We ascended it (a very gentle rise) till 8.15 a.m., when we reached a low watershed, across which were the ruins of two small rooms, and a wall of broken blocks from sky line to sky line. It may have been a former tribal boundary – or a fortified frontier. Across the watershed we were in the basin of Wadi Safra. The valley became more bare and stony, and the hills each side less variegated. After half an hour we passed a well on the East, next a little stone ziaret in the mouth of a side valley. An hour later the valley joined a larger one coming from the N.E. and running S.W. down a gorge into Wadi Safra, on the further side of which we could just see the palm groves of Jedida. Our track crossed this larger Wadi, and went up a small affluent for half an hour, across another divide, and down a broad wadi for three-quarters of an hour to Wadi Safra in the middle of Wasta. The going underfoot from Wadi Bir iIbn Hassani to Wasta was rough and hard.

Wasta used to be a town of about 1,000 houses, divided into four hamlets scattered about Wadi Safra, which is here broad. The houses are built on earth mounds or the foot-hills, to be out of the floods, and there are palm groves all about them. The place had had about 4,000 people, but a flood has broken through the banks and destroyed much of the groves, so that today many of the houses are deserted. It will take years to repair the damage, as the soil is gone.

We stopped in Wasta till 2 p.m. The houses are mud built, with ceiling of quarter palm logs, palm ribs, and pressed earth all over. There is a small market, in which the best things were dates, very sweet and good, and still plentiful, in spite of the locusts, which were bad this year. There is a running stream in Wasta; where this is artificially confined, it is a swift channel a foot or two wide. Lower down it is released, and becomes a clear slow rivulet, about ten feet broad, and 18 inches deep, between thick strips of soft green turf. The palm trees have little canals, a foot or two deep, dug among them, and are watered in rotation; in consequence there is a lot of rank grass in all the groves, and flowering shrubs. The same is the case in every hollow in the wadi, for water can apparently be found almost anywhere about two feet deep. The spring (the right to so many minutes of whose water daily or weekly is sold with each plot of ground), is not very good water, being a little brackish, and warm. Some of the wells of private water in the groves are excellent. Wadi Safra floods every year, sometimes several times. The water may be 8 feet deep, and occasionally runs for two or three days. This is not astonishing, for every drop of water that falls on these polished hills must run off them as off glass, and Wadi Safra is the channel of a great drainage area.

The land and the trees are all owned by Beni Salem Harb, and the whole tribe lives on the produce of the valley. This is mainly dates, though a little tobacco, and some melons, marrows and cucumbers are grown, and grapes and fruits have been tried with success. The surplus dates are exported via Reis and Boreika to the Sudan, etc., and there exchanged for cereals and luxuries. This export seems to reach about 1,000 to 1,500 tons in a normal year.

The householders of the valley are all Beni Salem, but the actual work of cultivation is done by slaves (Khadim), of which every well-to-do house has four or five. These slaves are negroid, and with their thick bodies and fat legs look curiously out of place among the bird-like Arabs. They come from Suakin and Port Sudan originally, when small, with Takruri pilgrims, passing as their children, and are sold on arrival in the Hejaz. When grown, the price of a male ranges from £60 to £30, according to season and trade conditions. Being of such value, they are treated fairly well. In the towns they do household work, and have easy lives. In the villages they have to work hard, but have the envied solace of being allowed to marry with the female slaves, and bring up families. These families are, of course, the property of the master, but etiquette prescribes the granting of reasonable privileges to a father and mother. Their work becomes light, and they are usually not separated from their children until these are grown up. They are all Moslems, but have no legal status, and cannot appeal to tribal custom, or even to the Sherif's court. When they fail to satisfy their master they are beaten, but by public opinion cruelty is discouraged, and on the whole they seemed a very contented lot. They are generally allowed a little pocket money, with which they add to their stock of clothes. About 5% of Feisal's army was composed of them, the younger lads being preferred for service. There are supposed to be about 10,000 of them in Wadi Safra, and perhaps half as many again in Wadi Yanbo, which is the other great cultivated area in the middle Hejaz. The villages in Wadi Safra from its mouth to its source are Bedr Honein (the largest, said to have about 6,000 people), Bruka, Alia, Fara, Jedida, Husseiniya, Dghubij, Wasta, Kharma, Hamra, Um Dheiyal, Hazma and Kheif (or Jedida as the Turks call it).

I left Wasta at 2 P.M., and rode up Wadi Safra past Kharma (ten minutes) to Hamra at 3 p.m. The Wadi is from 100 to 300 yards broad, of fine shingle and sand, very smooth swept by the floods. The walls are of absolutely bare red and black rock, with edges and ridges sharp as knife blades reflecting the sun like metal. Thanks to the green of the grass and the gardens, the whole effect was very beautiful. At Hamra the place was swarming with Sidi Feisul's camel convoys and soldiers. I found him in a little mud house built on a 20 foot knoll of earth, busied with many visitors. Had a short and rather lively talk, and then excused myself, and went off to the Egyptian artillery; who were very comfortably encamped in a palm grove. Zeki Bey received me warmly, and pitched me a tent in a grassy glade, where I had a bath and slept really well, after dining and arguing with Feisul (who was most unreasonable) for hours and hours.

October 24. Awoke late. Sidi Feisul came to see me at 6.30 a.m., and we had another hot discussion, which ended amicably. Then the Egyptian Officers came up, full of griefs, some of which are quite real. They lasted till nearly noon, when I went out and explored Hamra, and went up towards Kheif to the sentinels, who were not in any danger! Hamra itself is a small place of perhaps 150 houses (hidden in trees on 20 foot earth mounds), a little stream, and very luxuriant groves and grass plots. I talked to all of Feisul's men I could. They were dotted about all over the place, mostly Juheina, and Beni Salem, Ahmeda, Subh, Rahala, and Beni Amr. They seemed a very tough lot, and were mostly amusing; also, in the best of spirits imaginable for a defeated army.

Then saw Feisul again. This time everything went most smoothly, and he seemed less nervy. His optimism, or his contempt of the possibility of a Turkish advance, was curiously fixed.

At 4 p.m. mounted; with a new escort of 14 Sherifs, all Juheina, and mostly relatives of Mohammed Ali El Bedawi of Yenbo, whither I am to go, by the Haj road. To reach this we went down Wadi Safra for a few minutes, crossing its bank, and entered a side wadi which opens on Kharma. The going is excellent, at first through very thick brushwood but from 5.30 to 5.45 the path turns more west, up a stiff and narrow pass, confined on both sides by dry walls of large unhewn stones. This work continues down the other side of the watershed, for about two miles. It had obviously been a graded road, which had been in places only a revetted bank, but elsewhere a causeway sometimes six to eight feet high, through the gorge. The surface may have been paved, but is to-day all in ruins, and breached by the stream. From the remains it may have been 20 feet wide, but I saw it in the dark only, and could not examine it. It might have been the work of almost anybody, down to Mohammed Ali.

At 6.30 p.m. reached the bottom of the pass (now a very steep and rough descent) and took a road that passes a little to the north of Bir Said, across a most intricate system of wadis and small hills with some larger wadis bearing S. or S.W. and loose blocks of lava here and there. At 8.30 p.m. we reached

Bir El Moiya or Moiyat El Kalaat, a well just under the ruins of a small fort on a low hill. It was probably a guard house of the Pilgrim road, over the water.

October 25. Started again at 3 a.m., up and down the same labyrinth of wadis, till 5 a.m., when dawn broke finding us in the middle of a confused Harrah with sandy floor. The rocks were bent and twisted and cracked, most oddly. At 5.45 a.m. had got clear of this Harrah, which died away in a great sea of sand dunes, interspersed with rocky hills, all spattered with sand to their tops. Numerous wadis drained this area, trending rather rapidly downhill towards the sea, which was visible to the S.S.W.

We now held steadily west, with an occasional aimless tack towards the North. At 7.30 a.m. we were over the dunes and came out on a flat sandy plain, with a good deal of scrub and acacia on it at first, and with low hills, to the south, prolonged westward into a small coastal range. On the north were other low hills, spurs of the central mass to the north of them. (An easier road bending to the north, avoids the worst of the dunes.) From 7.30 to 8.45 a.m. we stopped, and then rode across an empty shingle plain till 10 a.m., when we entered a northern off-shoot of the small coastal range. Between it and the inland range was a rolling open space, falling from an indeterminate watershed a little N. of our road into Wadi Yenbo, whose palm-groves were visible about six miles away on the N.N.W. Behind the groves was the huge bulk of Jebel Rudhwa, the most striking hill in the district.

The foothills we crossed were low, and enclosed a thorn-grown plain, with a sandy floor. At 11 a.m. we came to the end of this, and rode over a small saddle on to the basin of Wadi Yenbo, which here was a very broad green belt of tamarisk and thorn, having on its eastern edge a conspicuous low hill with a domed lava head, called Jebel Araur El Milh, which deflects the wadi from S.S.W. to S.W. or even W.S.W. Above us the main channel trended up 30° N, for some distance. We stopped under an acacia tree in the wadi from 11.15 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then again at 3.15 to water the camels at a little water-hole of brackish water, about 4 feet below the surface in the main wadi, behind a wall of tamarisk. After that we went on for an hour and three quarters and stopped for the night. The country is again Tehama, made up of 10 foot slowly-swelling ridges and shallow valleys between. Wadi Yanbo main bed, where we crossed it, is about a mile and a half wide, but there are several smaller wadis, apparently subsidiary mouths, further west, and the stream, after crossing the track seems to swing round far to the west. The land between the track and the sea has a lot of scrub growing on it, so that the actual outlet of the wadi was not visible. The Tihama here is all so flat, that most of it goes under water whenever Wadi Yanbo comes down in strong flood.

October 26. Started again at 2 a.m. and reached Yanbo at 5.30 a.m. across a featureless but hard shingle and wet sand flat. Yanbo stands on a low stone outcrop, a few feet above the plain. I went to the home of Abd el Kadir El Abdo, Feisul's agent for military business, and a very well informed, efficient, and well-inclined official. He put me up for four days, during which I wandered back to Wadi Yanbo again to see the palm groves.

On Nov. 1st got on board the Suva
TEL

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31. *Report by Sykes*[1] (8 November 1916)

[...] On the 7th November Sir. R. Wingate sent a long telegram (No. 9) to the Foreign Office, in which he dealt with the whole situation. Since sending his telegram of the 2nd November (No. 627), Admiral Wemyss and Captain Lawrence had arrived from a visit to Faisal's camp, and he had discussed the situation with them [...].

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32. *Note*[2] (17 November 1916)

The Sherif is entirely dependant on the tribesmen for the success of his movement and it is they who have held up the Turks for the last five months. Assistance in material, especially of Q.F. guns and machine guns is vital if they are to be kept in the field. If given this there is no reason why they should not continue to operate successfully for an indefinite time. Their morale is excellent and their tactics and leadership well suited to the present objective.

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[1] In *Arabian Report*, no. XVII (n.s.), 8 November 1916 (night), p. 2. Preceded by the words 'Secret – only for intelligence', signed, registered as IOR/L/PS/10/586 4734/1916. The reference to Wingate's telegram allows us to better understand the circumstances and the occasion of the subsequent *Note* of 17.11.1916. Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss (1864–1933) in January 1916 was commander of the Navy's East Indies and Egyptian Squadron where he aided operations on the Arabian Front (see *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XVI).

[2] Unsigned typescript, undated, preceded by a summary with quotations from the text, dated 'November 1916'. Record no. FO/882/5 HRG/16/66. 'Secret' stamp on the opening. The summary opened with the following unsigned but probably Sykes' foreword: 'The following observations by Lieut. Lawrence, an officer of great experience and knowledge of Arabs who has just returned from a visit to Faisal's camp and also Rabegh, are very pertinent to the question of the despatch of a Brigade to Rabegh which seems again to be under consideration by H.M.G.'. Copies also in CAB 22/68 and CAB 22/70. Published (with variations) in *Arabian Report*, no. XVIII (n.s.), 20 November 1916 (night), with the title 'Report by Captain Lawrence, of Intelligence Staff, Cairo', accompanied by the wording 'Sent by G.O.C.,-in-C. Egypt, to D.M.I., and dated November 17 1916 (I.A. 2629)', pp. 8–9. The comment of Sykes to this report was the following: 'The reports of Captain Bray and Lawrence deserve close and careful reading. Captain Lawrence's statement in regard to the French attitude to the Arabs, and his references to their larger schemes of policy, must be the result of some misunderstanding, either by Captain Lawrence of the French, or by the French officers of their own Government's intentions, as it seems in no way to fit in with anything said or thought here or in Paris.' *Appreciation of Attached Arabian Report* no. XVIII (new series), 22 November 1916, p. 1, IOR/L/PS/10/586 4734/1916. Here I followed the original typescript.

A successful advance by Turks on Rabegh will mean that tribal resistance has ceased and Sherif's movement has no longer any military strength.

The spirit of the tribes is intensely national and suspicious of foreign interference. They welcome every sort of technical assistance, even though some European personnel is involved. The landing of a considerable foreign force, however, would undoubtedly alarm them and might well result in the return of many tribesmen to their tents, in which case we shall have contributed to the very result which we wish to avoid. Moreover, once tribal resistance ceases, the Turks are free to select the interior roads for an advance on Mecca.[1]

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[1] All the following part is present in two copies and also as a typewritten report, dated and signed to the War Cabinet, see CAB/42/24/8 and CAB/24/13/32. In *Arabian Report*, N.S., no. XIX, 29 November 1916 (night), Sykes wrote: 'Sir R. Wingate, telegraphing on the 22nd November (No. 29) , said that he had had an opportunity of discussing the situation with an intelligent and influential Sudanese who was sent to Mecca by Sir Said Ali El Murghani as his delegate, and in addition had received private letters from Colonel Wilson. [...] From the same source probably comes the information given by Captain Lawrence when he was in Karthoum, and in waring us of the danger of landing Christian troops in any large numbers in Hejaz he is probably right. [...] In this connection, Sir R. Wingate said that he was under the impression that the views of the French were slightly divergent on one point from the British. We should welcome the capture of Medina by the Sherif, but the French seem to regard with some alarm, in view of their future Syrian policy, the great increase of strength which the Sherif's cause would immediately obtain [...]. The above facts were present in the Sirdar's mind when making his recommendations, and Captain Lawrence's views have not modified the carefully considered plans elaborated in telegram No. 9 of the 7th November (see *Arabian Report* XVII, N.S., p. 2), which was concurred in by both Admiral Wemyss and Captain Lawrence when they discussed the situation with him in Khartoum. [...] He [Sir R. Wingate] suggested that this telegram should be shown to Sir W. Robertson, and added that since drafting it he had received the full text of Captain Lawrence's report, which gave him no reason for altering the views herein expressed. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs telegraphed (No. 18) to the Sirdar on the 20th November in regard to this report (see *Arabian Report*, XIX [but is XVIII], 20 November 1916) asking him:

1. Whether he endorsed Captain Lawrence's views;
2. Whether Captain Lawrence's objections would be equally applicable to a French Algerian force officered by Christians;
3. Whether he would recommend that French troops should he brought to Port Sudan or to Suez, there to await the request of the' Sherif for their despatch to Rabegh; and
4. Assuming that British troops were not to be employed in Hejaz, what was his opinion as to the employment of French?

The Sirdar telegraphed (No. 31) his reply on the 22nd November. In regard to the first question he said that the views of Captain Lawrence were those which he bad expressed at Khartoum when he was there with Admiral Wemyss, and he, the Sirdar, concurred in them generally. But when he had put to Captain Lawrence the contingency of a Turkish advance in force on Rabegh, and the possibility of arresting this by a brigade of French or British troops urgently summoned by the Sherif, he understood him to agree that this help would be

The towns in the Hejaz do not support the Sherif's movement, since they are agglomerations of foreign settlers, and the Hejaz revolt is supremely Arab. All the forces fighting for the Sherif are made up of tribesmen, and it is the tribal army (3,000–4,000 strong) under Sidi Feisul in the Yenbo-Khaif-Bir ibn Hassani massif of hills that held up the advance on Mecca (or Rabegh) of Fakhri Pasha's army for five months.

Rabegh is not, and never has been, defensible with Arab forces, and the Turks have not got there because these hill-tribes under Feisul bar their way. If the hill-tribes yield, the Turks need not look for any further opposition to their advance till near Mecca itself.

This situation affects our consideration of the scheme to land an allied force at Rabegh. So long as the tribes hold out such a force is not necessary.

If the tribes give way the Turks will reach Rabegh in about four days. This does not give time for the collection, embarkation, transport, disembarkation, and preparation of a position for a British force to hold the 6,000 yard long front of the palm groves at Rabegh. Therefore, the British force, to arrive at Rabegh in time, must arrive there while the tribes are still resisting the Turks.

The tribal opinion is at present chauvinistic. They are our very good friends, while we respect their independence. They are deeply grateful for the help we have given them, but fear lest we may make it a claim upon them afterwards. We have appropriated too many Moslem countries for them to have any real trust in our disinterestedness, and they are terribly afraid of an English occupation of the Hejaz. If the British, with or without the approval of the Sherif, disembarked an armed force at Rabegh powerful enough to take possession of the groves and organise a position there, they would, I am convinced, say "We are betrayed" and scatter to their tents.

Stress has often been laid on the point that the Sherif has personally asked for British troops to be landed, when the urgent moment comes. His wording showed his reluctance sufficiently – and when that urgent moment comes the

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welcomed by the Arabs, who, despite their religious objections, would cling to this hope of success rather than acquiesce in the certain defeat which the failure to hold Rabegh would involve. Colonels Wilson and Parker, who are on the spot, whose knowledge of Arabs is considerable, and who have had much war experience, proposed the emergency measures which he, the Sirdar, advocated in his telegram of the 12th November to the C.I.G.S. [Chief of the Imperial General Staff] and they are of the opinion that Rabegh could and should be held if there were a Turkish advance in force. The Sirdar concurred in the reason which Captain Lawrence gave for Colonel Bremond's attitude; he had just returned from Rabegh, and was of opinion that four batteries and six French battalions would be required for its defence. [. . .] As to the second question, the Sherif would prefer British to French troops, but if British are not available (? he would gladly), in the great emergency foreshadowed, accept an offer of the others. [. . .] The Sherif was well aware that troops must be accompanied by Christian officers and personnel; he had no objection to their presence in the coast towns, but he would rightly object to their march inland, on the grounds Captain Lawrence had so clearly indicated.'

tribal resistance has collapsed, and the Sherif's revolt has come to an end. He will be the minority of one.

I do not think anyone who has examined the Hejaz lately will contest that the Sherif's strength lies only amongst the tribes: and it follows that when the tribes go over to the Turks there is no more "Sherif's movement".

The objections to the landing of a British force do not apply to aeroplanes. The Arabs look upon these as delightful toys and are longing for them. They also want instructors in techincal matters (artillery, machine guns, bombing, W.T., armoured cars) and are prepared on these grounds to welcome the French contingent and anything we like to send. No European escort is necessary, if they behave tastefully, and follow local advice: and if the Turks break through prematurely (as they may do if reinforced) the personnel and all the light equipment can be reembarked and the rest destroyed.

The French Military Mission sees things in a different light. They say "Above all things the Arabs must not take Medina. This can be assured if an allied force lands at Rabegh. The tribal contingents will go home, and we will be the sole bulwark of the Sherif in Mecca. At the end of the war we give him Medina as his reward".

This is of course a definite policy, agreable to their large scheme. It breaks down, I think, in the assumption that an allied force at Rabegh would defend Mecca for good and all. Once the Turks are able to dispense with the tribal resistance, they will be able to advance along any of the central or eastern roads to Mecca, leaving the Franco-British force a disconsolate monument on the dusty beach at Rabegh.

The policy of not landing a British force at Rabegh should not be made an excuse for doing nothing in the Hejaz. If we spare ourselves this expense and trouble, it is all the more incumbent upon us to stiffen the tribal army on which we are going to rely for the defence of Mecca. This stiffening is (by request) not to consist of personnel, but of materials. Sherif Feisul asked nearly four months ago for three batteries of Q.F. mountain guns; and not only have none been sent, but he has not been given any written or verbal answer to his demand.

There may be no Q.F. mountain guns in the British army: there are plenty in Greece, and Italy, and France (and perhaps in Portugal): the British Government can certainly supply them if it wishes ... and if it does not it must take the responsability if the tribal resistance fails, and they still, in my opinion, be able to hold up the present Turkish force as long as they require. Their morale is excellent, their tactics and manner of fighting admirably adapted to the very difficult country they are defending, and their leaders fully understand that to provoke a definite issue now is to lose the war, and to continue the present "guerre de course" is sooner or later to wear out the

Turkish power of resistance, and force them back on a passive defence of Medina and its railway communication.
TEL

33. *Nationalism among the Tribesmen*[1] (17 November 1916)

Tribal opinion in the Hejaz struck me as intensely national, and more sophisticated than the appearance of the tribesmen led one to expect. Jiddah and Mecca are not Arab in their composition, but are collections of Javanese, Sudanese, Hindus, Turks, and Bokhariots, without any sympathy for Arab ideals, and at present suffering somewhat from the force of Arab sentiment, which is too lately released from Turkish compression to be quite level-headed. In seeking the cause of this sudden growth of national feeling, I was informed that German propaganda was an important contributory factor. The Germans preached Jehad the first few months of the war, till they saw that the idea had fallen flat. They then skipped across at once to a base of nationalism, and tried to awaken in the provinces, the (in their opinion) dormant Ottoman sensibility. They taught that Germans were Germans, and British, British; and, therefore, it behoved the Ottomans to be Ottoman, and to assert their separate existence, in the name of the principle of nationality. The fate of the Armenians was the Turkish reading of that lesson ... and the Hejaz rising was the Arab reaction to this and other influences. Instinct (the Arab believes himself superior to all other races), money, and the counsels and example of the family of Sherif Hussein found an unexpected ally in German propaganda and Neo-Turk dogma.

Whatever the cause, Arab feeling in the Hejaz runs from complete patriotism amongst the educated Sherifs down to racial fanaticism in the ignorant. One thing, of which the tribes are convinced, is that they have made an Arab government, and consequently that each of them is it. The towns are sighing for the contented obstructionist inactivity of the Ottoman government, or for the ordered quiet of our own rule; the tribes know they are independent, and mean to enjoy their independence. This will not entail anarchy, as the family tie and the system of tribal responsibility will be tightened, but it entails the practical disappearance or negation of central power in internal affairs. The Sherif may have his political sovereignty abroad, and shall have – so far as they can secure it; but their home affairs must be settled by their own tribal sheikhs. "Is Damascus to rule the Hejaz, or can we rule Damascus?" said a Sherif, and it would be hard to say which would be the bigger problem. However, they will not allow it to be set, for their idea of nationality is the independence of tribes and parishes, and their idea of national union is episodic combined resistance to an intruder. Constructive politics, an organised state, and an extensive empire, are not only beyond their capacity but anathema to their instincts. They are fighting to get rid of empire, not to win it, and the only unity that is possible is one to which they are forced by foreign influence, or control. Unless we or our allies, make an efficient Arab empire, there will never be more than a discordant mosaic of provincial administrations.

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[1] Original typescript in SAD 143/6/23 and followed by two commentary notes by the Sirdar and dated 17.11.1916. Published with some variations in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 32, 26 November 1916. See Chapter XIV of *Seven Pillars*.

Any such assumption of foreign right to organise them is bitterly rejected by the Arabs. "We are delighted to be your friends, most grateful for what you have given us, but do please remember that we are not British subjects. We should feel more at ease if you were not so disproportionate an ally." Feisul meant that the touchiness of Arab tribesmen at any suggestion from us in internal affairs was due, not to rational offence, but to consciousness of material and physical weakness. Their government will have something of a cripple's temper until it has found its feet.

In my supposed capacity of a Syrian I made some sympathetic reference to the executions by Jemal Pasha of the Arab leaders of Damascus. The Sherifs, and those who knew the real history, abhorred the act. The others said: "But Jemal Pasha published papers showing that these men had sold their country to the French and English. If he had not put them to death, it would have been our duty as Arabs to have done his work."

The feeling seemed to grow in intensity towards the north. The Harb were less keen than the Juheina, and the Juheina less Chauvinistic than the Billi. The Billi, I believe, hold back from the Sherif, not because they like the Turk, but because they fear that the Sherif means the British.

Of religious fanaticism I found little trace. The Sherif has refused in round terms to give a religious twist to his rebellion. The tribes know that the Turks are Mohammedans, and think that the Germans are probably true friends of Islam. They know that we are Christians, and that we are their friends. In the circumstances their religion would not be of much use to them, and they have put it aside. "Christian fights Christian, so why shouldn't Mohammedan do the same? What we want is a government that speaks Arabic, and will let us live in peace. Also, we hate those Turks."

34. *The Turkish Hejaz Forces and Their Reinforcement*[1] (26 November 1916)

On 9 June 1916, there was in Medina part of a battalion of the 129th Regiment, a Mohafiz Alai, the Yemen Mofraza of the Stotzingen Mission, and some train troops, with the fortress gunners of the Medina forts.

When the news of the revolt arrived the Turkish government sent down the two battalions of the 130th Regiment which had been for six months at Tartus watching Ruad Island, and parts of Regiments 42 and 55 of the 14th Division intercepted at Aleppo on their way to the Caucasus. Some artillery and technical details were also sent, and such of the units as were below strength were re-made from the Yemen Mofraza, which has apparently been entirely broken up in the process.

This force was named the Hejaz Expeditionary Force, under the supreme command of Jemal Pasha. Fakhri Pasha commands in Medina, and Basri Pasha the El Ula section. Fakhri is a Turk of the pre-German school, with long administrative experience. He was the executive of the Adana massacre of 1909, and the recent affairs at Zeitun and Hajin. Basri was the Turkish Mohafiz of Medina, and a popular official.

The present composition and distribution of the force appears to be roughly as follows:

Medina

OC Abd el-Rahman Bey.

4/131st Regiment. A gendarmerie unit from Aleppo province, of about 600 Turks.

1/129th Regiment. A nominal battalion of regimental details and drafts. About 700 strong. Probably eighty per cent Turks.

Regiment Camel Corps. About 500 strong, patrolling to Bir Derwish. Turks.

79th Machine-gun Company. Four machine-guns; mule transport (pack). Personnel: probably partly Arab.

Fortress Artillery. Turks. Several masonry forts with old guns of position.

Three Companies of Engineers. Turks, taken respectively from the 47th, 48th and 49th Divisional Engineers.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 32, 26 November 1916. The text was preceded by the editorial annotation: 'Compiled from information in possession of G.H.Q. (E.E.F.)'. The so-called Stotzingen-Neufeld Expedition greatly worried the British and is mentioned several times in the *Arab Bulletin* (e.g. No. 94, 25 June 1918): in June 1915 Othmar Freiherr von Stotzingen (1867–1923) had gone to Hodeira in Yemen to establish a secret information centre there, but ran into a revolt organized by Husain ibn Ali who forced him to flee to Syria, abandoning numerous secret documents, which were then passed into the hands of the English. In 1909, the massacre of Adana, Cilicia, mentioned by Lawrence later, was perpetrated by the Turks against Armenian Christians but also against Muslims. It resulted in nearly 6,500 deaths.

Bir Derwish District
OC Ghalib Bey.
1, 2, 3/55th Regiment. Mostly Turks. Battalions perhaps 800 strong.
2, 3/42nd Regiment. Mostly Turks. Battalions perhaps 8–900 strong.
3/130th Regiment. Camel Transport Battalion, mostly Arabs.
Two Companies, Mule MI. Turks.
Regiment of Camel Corps. Patrolling to Bir Raha.
One Battery, Camel Mountain Artillery. 22nd Artillery Regiment.
Field-gun Batteries.?
Aeroplane Section. Three aeroplanes, of which two are probably disabled. A fourth perhaps to come.

Bir Raha District
OC Amin Bey.
1, 2/130th Regiment. About 700 strong, each containing about thirty per cent Arabs.
Camel Corps. 300 Shammar Arabs.
Company Mule MI.
Three Mountain-guns.
Two Field-guns.
Wireless Section. Apparatus on three carts. From them wires are taken to pole twenty-five feet high, 100 yards away.

Lines of Communication Units
Railway
Mohafiz Alai. 800 strong.
Regiment Camel Corps. H. W. Bueir, with one company and two guns. Company at Abu el-Naam, and one at Bowat (two guns).
El Ula
One Battalion. Turks. Perhaps the missing 1/42nd.
Ageyl Camel Corps. Arabs.
El Wejh
One Battalion Gendarmes. 800 strong. Turks.
Ageyl Camel Corps. Arabs.
Total numbers perhaps:

	Dismounted	*Mounted*
Weij	800	400
El Ula	800	300
Railway	900	600
Bir Raha	2,000	400
Bir Derwish	4,500	700
Medina	1,300	600
	10,300	3,000

Between Medina and Bir Derwish there were about 2,000 camels, and the two battalions at Bir Abbas were allowed 130 camels each for food, water, ammunition and baggage transport. Water was a very small item, as there were local supplies, and men were only given a water-bottle per day.

Possible Reinforcement

It is possible that Turkish and German opinions on the importance of the Hejaz operations are divergent. The Turks see their national reputation, enhanced by their preliminary successes over us, endangered by the Sherif's continuance. The Germans may think Maan easier to defend than Medina. It is, perhaps, risky to over-estimate the German influence in the Turkish war-council. The Turkish official is as difficult to guide or drive as anyone on earth, and his German advisers, no doubt, have many revolts and obstructions in their way.

Another governing factor must be the carrying capacity of the Hejaz railway. This is a vexed point, requiring exhaustive treatment and full materials, not yet available.

The Turkish army to-day consists of forty-two divisions, and the Medina force. The paper strength of a division is 12,000 rifles, and the actual strength in rifles of an untouched division seldom exceeds 9,000. An engaged division may be anything from 3,000 rifles upwards. Turkey's weakness of reserve prevents her making good her losses. The total strength of her armies in rifles to-day appears to be less than 350,000 and her depots are nearly dry. She has been reduced to spreading reports that she has found her population larger than she expected, and that great reserves of man-power are, therefore, available when the moment comes. Unfortunately, much of the force of this new discovery was taken off by her coincident reduction of twelve divisions (which had in 1915 a strength of 114 battalions of 800 men each), to twelve regiments each of three battalions of 800–1,000 men.

The distribution of the Turkish army is now; eighteen divisions against the Russians in Armenia, five in Mesopotamia and Persia, six in Syria, three in southern Arabia, one at Smyrna, and nine in Europe. Those in Europe used to be concentrated in Thrace and formed a reserve army, till the needs of their allies forced the Turks to scatter one to Bulgaria, two to Galicia, two or three to the Dobruja: so that to-day they have only one in Constantinople, and three or two in the Dardanelles on which to draw for further military efforts.

If Turkey has a strategical reserve to-day, it would appear to be in the Syrian army, the only considerable body of troops not in actual contact with the enemy; and the Syrian army, being under Jemal Pasha is also the most likely to send reinforcements to the Hejaz. In consequence its situation is of direct importance in Hejaz operations.

The military district of the 4th (Syrian) army extends from the Taurus to Medina, and the divisions composing it are the 3rd, 23rd, 27th, 41st, 43rd and

44th. Syria has been split into divisional zones, and each commander made responsible for part of the coast.

In the northern sectors the troops are thickest. From Mersina to Aleppo, Syria is the line of communications for the Southern Army of the Caucasus, for Mesopotamia and Persia, as well as for Sinai and Arabia. The railway on which these fronts depend runs very close to the sea and accidents of terrain make it easy to attack. In consequence we have the 23rd Division (two regiments, perhaps 5,000 men in all and mainly Turks) guarding from Mersina to Adana, with its main strength at Tarsus, and the 44th Division (complete, of perhaps 9,000 men, ninety per cent Turks) takes over from it round the head of the Gulf of Alexandretta almost to Aleppo, with its headquarters at Erzin. Alexandretta itself, and Aleppo, and the main part of Syria, down to the Tripoli-Homs gap, are in the area of the 41st Division (perhaps 8,000 strong, seventy per cent Turks), whose main force is concentrated at Beilan. South of the 41st Division comes the 43rd with an independent regiment (the 67th) in Lebanon. Its duty is to cover Damascus, but we know so little of it that we suspect it is inchoate. It is probably mainly Turk, but the 67th Regiment is largely Arab, and so in the Hauran is a reserve of troops, some of them line battalions, some of them depot-troops, sent there no doubt to overawe the Druses, but also to simplify the problem of feeding them. They must be 4,000 or 5,000 strong. In Haifa district was the 27th Division, (8,000 strong, including many Arabs), which has been in movement southward, apparently to relive the 3rd Division (6,000 strong, all Turks) in Sinai. The 27th Division used to be the Sinai garrison, and then gave way to the 3rd, which lost about fifty per cent of effectives at Katia, and is perhaps to be rested and repaired in the rich and quiet district about Nazareth.

The term 'strategic reserve', tentatively applied to the Turkish army in Syria alone, is, therefore, seen to be rather illusory, since the Syrian garrison is playing an essential part either in defending the main L. of C. (three divisions) on controlling a restless population (one division, one regiment, and the composite force at Deraa), or opposing the British canal army (one division in line, and one in reserve).

The 27th and 3rd Divisions are indispensable – to the Turks – and can hardly afford to send large drafts to Medina – even though the weakness of the railway link with Damascus, while the Hejaz needs a daily train, may make it unwise to reinforce them heavily. The force in Lebanon is also necessary, and the Sherif's policy with the Hauran Druses and Arabs should hold the Deraa force in its place. The retention of Divisions 23, 41 and 44, about the Gulf of Alexandretta is dependent on the opinion entertained by the Turkish staff about the necessity for guarding this, the most vulnerable point on its line of communication from the Caucasus, Mesopotamia and Syria – a point where an Allied landing would wreck, at one stroke, all three campaigns.

The other Turkish armies may be dismissed more briefly. The force in Mesopotamia and Persia will not be wantonly brought back while Baghdad is in danger, or until a further Russian advance in Armenia threatens its communications. The Turkish forces in Armenia, over the 500 mile front from the Black Sea to Rowanduz, amount to no more than 102,000 rifles, and while Russia maintains her hold can hardly acquit themselves of their own task, much less spare men for Medina. The army in Europe, available for active service, is infinitesimal.

It will, therefore, be hard for Turkey either to form new units or spare old ones, for the comparative luxury of a campaign in the Hejaz; and so the appearance of the overwhelming force which would put an immediate end to the Arab rising is improbable. On the other hand the warfare in Arabia is on a pigmy scale, and so little turns the difference that the Turks may think it cheaper to strike than to defend. They could spare a division from North Syria, if the transport problem is soluble, if they can overcome the reluctance of their German staff to side-shows, and if they can feel assured that the Allies appear to have abandoned any idea of striking by sea at Syria. Of these three difficulties the problem of transport is perhaps the greatest.

T.E.L.

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35. *Report by Sykes*[1] (29 November 1916)

Report of the Arab Bureau for October

The report says that the staff of the Arab Bureau has been considerably increased, and that it has been possible to reoganise the office with a view to undertaking more work of a general and particular character. Lieutnant-Commander Hogarth, R.N.V.R., has been engaged upon the editing of a portfolio on *Arabian Personalities* and the preparation of the Arab Bulletin, besides acting in an advisory capacity. He is also seeing the *Yemen Handbook* through the press, and will undertake the collection of all Hejaz information for the second edition of the *Hejaz Handbook*. Lieutenant the Hon. E. Fielding, R.N.V.R., has undertaken duty with the Bureau, and is making a special study of Abyssinia and the adjacent countires. Second-Lieutenant Lawrence is to make propaganda his special domain. [. . .]

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[1] Published in *Arabian Report*, N.S., no. XIX, 29 November 1916 (night). The volumes that Hogarth was editing were published on their own, in the corpus of materials drawn up by the Arab Bureau. Hogarth had also used information collected by Lawrence in writing. The *Handbook of Hejaz* was published in two editions: the first was printed in June 1916 but a second was immediately put in the pipeline. In both, the biographical profiles of Hussein and his sons are exactly those written by Lawrence and published here under No. 25.

36. *Lawrence to Hogarth*[1] (2 December 1916)

Director Arab Bureau
I got a wire from George Lloyd asking me to meet him at Yenbo. So I stopped till today. I am off now in half an hour to Feisul, who is at Kheif Hussein. No more news of the skirmishes at Kheif. I hope to clear up that situation, and expect to be back on Monday night.

Garland takes over my cipher. He is a most excellent man, and has won over everybody here. The very man for the place. His pupils seem to have got in well on the Railway on the 29th.

Atmospherics have been very bad, and so I have not been able to wire much.

Lloyd has arrived at the root of the matter, and his report will be worth seeing.

Let me know Newcombe's movements.
TEL
Has been wildly rushed all day + yesterday mapping in airplane ground here.
L.

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37. *Lawrence to Hogarth*[2] (5 December 1916)

Director Arab Bureau.

One of the things not fixed when I came down here was my chief, and my manner of reporting. It is probably through Colonel Wilson, but as there is a post going to Egypt tonight I am sending this direct in advantage of the omission.

Today is Tuesday and I had left for Feisal's [*sic*] camp on Saturday afternoon. I will send a full route report after this post. Meanwhile I will only give you a rude sketch of what Feisal told me, in elaboration of a telegram just sent off. I had better preface by saying that I rode all Saturday night, had alarms and excursions all Sunday night, and rode again all last night, so my total of sleep is only three hours in the last three nights and I feel rather pessimistic.

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[1] From Yenbo, 2.12.1916, autograph in pencil, dated, signed; registered as FO/882/6 HRG/16/71A. On letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo – Telegrams: Arbur Cairo, Telephone: 5595.5615'). See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 95. Major Herbert Garland (1880–1921) was a British Army explosives expert who was particularly distinguished for his sabotage and demolition raids on the Hejaz railway during the Arab Revolt. Lawrence often talks about Garland in *Seven Pillars* and in his reports. Garland will be the one to comment on Lawrence's latest writing on the *Arab Bulletin*, here at No. 118. Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Francis Newcombe (1878–1956) was chief of the British Military Mission to the Hejaz and conducted demolition raids on the Hejaz Railway (1916–17).

[2] From Yenbo, 5.12.1916, Dated and signed typescript, registered as FO/882/6 HRG/16/71B. See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 96, but incomplete.

All the same, things are bad. Henceforward much of the Harb will have to be ruled out. The Hawazim are almost openly wrong, and all the other Beni Salem will tend to hedge, and try to make peace with the people occupying their palm groves. Faisal puts most of the trouble down to the lack of those oft quoted mountain guns, so that is some chilly comfort for us.

The defection of the Beni Salem, if followed (not as yet) by a slackening of the Subh, will lay open the Sultani Road and imperil the holders of the Ghayir and Gaza and Fura areas. In fact, the shield of Rabegh on which, in my old report, I relied for all the defensive work is now gone. There is nothing now to prevent the Turks going South except Ali's anemic force at Rabegh itself, the possibility of a recrudescence of the warlike spirit of the Harb in their rear, or the fear of Feisal behind them all.

Feisal's position becomes difficult. He is cut off by the Wadi Safra from the Hejaz proper, and his power of cutting the Sultani Road becomes remote.

He is left with the Juheina only and they are a tribe with the seeds of trouble all present in them, in the jealousy of the Ibn Bedawi family of the whole hold Feisal is getting over their tribesman. Feisal is the beau ideal of the tribal leader. I heard him address the head of one battalion last night before sending them out to an advanced position over the Turkish camp at Bir Said. He did not say much, no noise about it, but it was all exactly right and the people rushed over one another with joy to kiss his headrope when he finished. He has had a nasty knock in Zeid's retreat, and he realized perfectly well that it was the ruin of all his six months' work up here in the hills tying tribe to tribe and fixing each in its proper area. Yet he took it all in public as a joke, chaffing people on the way they had run away jeering at them like children, but without in the least hurting their feelings and making the others feel that nothing much had happened that could not be put right. He is magnificent for to me privately he was most horribly cut up.[1]

As for putting right the damage supposing he weathers the Ibn Bedawi efforts and keeps the Juheina in good spirits still he has lost the tribes of the hills himself. The old troubles may, I fear, reopen, and Juheina will be fought by Harb when they want only to get into the Turks.

Feisal becomes a tribal leader, not a leader of tribes. Another thing, Feisal is out of his area here. He know little more about Wadi Yenbo than we do. The names of places, sorts of roads and water supply are strange to him. He could still strike north, raise the Billi and Howeitat tribes and develop into South Syria, only he cannot do this while the Turkish force is free to attack Mecca in his absence.

I asked him about the effect on the tribes of the fall of Rabegh and Mecca. It seems both have a great name among the tribes and he was not sure that the warlike feelings of the Juheina would survive the recovery of them by the Turks. Once he thought they would and then he thought they would not. Anyway he himself would not stick in the north and see Mecca fall. He swore he would come down by sea at once with the few Bisha and Had that could come with him and die in defense of his people. On the other hand he does change his mind, and I estimate his personal prestige among the Arabs so great as to survive everything except actual and direct military disaster.

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[1] About that event see *Seven Pillars* Chapter XX.

If he'll loses Wadi Yembo it will be greatly dimmed and he will go to Wadi His as a sort of fugitive and will lose Yenbo.

Feisal received me most cordially and I lived all the time with him in his tent or camp, so I had a very great insight into what he could do at a pinch. If I was not such a physical rag I would tell you all about it.

(sd.) T.E. Lawrence

P.S. Don't use any of above in bulletin or elsewhere, it is not just – because I am done up.

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38. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (6 December 1916)

Dear Colonel Wilson

I got back yesterday and found your wire saying that I was to wire urgently anything critical. As a matter of fact the only thing urgent is for an air reconnaissance of Bir Said and Bir Jabir and Wadi Safra – and that is not possible till our landing ground here is finished (this afternoon) and I can direct the planes where these places are.* Unless they get a better map or local knowledge the planes simply are flying in the dark, and their reports cannot be much use. As a matter of fact we have never had any news from them at all to date. Perhaps they have none, or else they don't know we are here!

About wiring urgently. It is not possible from the S.N.O.'s [Senior Naval Officer's] ship. Atmospherics are bad just now, and naval messages take precedence, and the S.N.O. has a lot of wiring of his own, of course. I don't suppose my wire of conditions in Feisul's camp will get through for some day yet, and it is a long one of about 400 groups. This state of affairs will continue till we have a station of our own. I am very sorry to hear that the despatch boat is 'off'. It would have meant better touch with Rabegh, and less wiring.

The Minto is coming in today, and I am sending by it direct to Cairo an expansion of my telegram No. 29, which I expect will arrive quicker than the telegram itself via you.** The situation is certainly not good – and in the maze of conflicting reports and obvious exaggerations afloat here one can hardly see more. I am afraid the morale of the Harb is badly shaken, and Feisul's prestige and scope will suffer severely if he is confined to the Juheina only. However as soon as the aeroplanes can find their way about I will get up country again, and try and feel the intentions of Feisul and the Turks a little more closely.*** Feisul treats me very well, and lets me ask hear and see everything, including his agents. Of course I still pass as a Syrian officer, which makes my style a little cramped. My three days nearly knocked me up. To begin with I only got an average of one hour's sleep per 24, then we did some very hard camel travelling, and the alarms and excitements of the camp were great.

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[1] From Yenbo, dated '6.12.1916'. Cfr. Garnett, *The Letters of Lawrence of Arabia*, p. 211, albeit incomplete. Regarding the communication difficulties that complicated the work of information gathering, note the time gap between Lawrence's original reports and their dissemination to the commands or their publication in the *Arab Bulletin*. The account promised to Wilson is the report that follows in No. 39. On the activities of Sherif Abd el Kader's agent, see Chapter XXIII of *Seven Pillars* where Lawrence talks about it extensively.

As for when I will go up – that depends I'm afraid entirely on how things work out. General Clayton's orders to me were to go ashore and do what seemed best, and it would be hard to be more definite. I do not quite understand what the Sirdar can mean by my superintending the 'supply question'. All that comes is handed over to the Sherif's agent, Abd el Kader, in the steamer, and discharged and stored by him. There is no possible road for us to butt into the matter, nor do I think it desirable. If each ship is given a full list of stores on board for Yenbo, in English or Arabic, then all necessary is the handing over of that list to Abd el Kader, and his receipt that he has had the contents.**** Our interference in matters of internal organization is not encouraged exactly!

I have asked you to let me hear occasionally about Sherif Abdulla and his movements. If he closes with the Turks he might be quite useful to the Wadi Safra operations, and fuller information would enable Feisul to coordinate. Of course it is quite probable that you have no news!

The "old man of the sea" of those Q.F. Mountain Batteries still weights us. If we could only get that responsibility off we would have done all and more than they asked.

One's isolation at Yenbo and lack of touch with everything will make one unable to see what news you need. So will you whenever a thing crops up send me a telegram asking for light on so and so? One gets so used to local things that one forgets they are unknown outside.

Yours sincerely
T.E. Lawrence

I have so much coding and decoding, and local work that I have been unable to write a word of a report which ought to be written on my visit to Feisul. If I can write one I will send it (or a copy, according to postal opportunity) to you.

Have just recd. a telegram from you, and one to Garland asking for news. I'm very sorry, but owing to atmospherics and press of normal work Capt.

Boyle had to refuse my messages, and this meant two days' delay. I hope they most of them got off last night.
L.
* If they will take me up I will show them the roads.
** This is done to save the great delay of going to Jidda first: and there is not enough news in it to make it worth while sending a copy to you.
*** Agents were not much good.
**** If you think fit, please explain the local conditions to the Sirdar. Abd el Kader is as efficient and reliable as any British Officer.

39. [*Left Yenbo on Saturday Dec. 2*][1] (After 6 December 1916)

2/12 to 5/12/16

Left Yenbo on Saturday Dec. 2, about 4.30 P.M., with Abd el Kerim, Sherif and Emir of the Juheina, younger brother of Mohammed Ali el Beidawi. He is the son of a negro woman, very dark, about 26 years old, obviously half African, but energetic, active, and endowed with a humour which is as salacious as it is easy. He is a tremendous rider, doing camel journeys at three times the normal speed, and is strongly anti-Turk. With him there were three or four men, and we had a very rapid and merry journey. We rode straight over the plain till 7.30 P.M., when we stopped till 9 P.M., eating a little bread and drinking coffee, while Abd el-Kerim and his men played games on each other and exchanged japes. Everything was very free, very good-tempered, and not at all dignified.

After we re-started, an hour's journey brought us to the end of a low range of hills (rock and sand) which cuts off the plain in which Yenbo stands from Wadi Yenbo. The Bir Said road passes South of this range along the Tehama; our present road turned up Wadi Agida, a narrow winding sandy valley between the hills. It had flooded lately and the going was good. I think even in normal times a car would get over it. At 11 P.M. we came to the watershed, next an old cistern called only the Sebil, on the left hand side of the road. We then galloped down to Nakhl Mubarak, which we reached at 11.30 P.M.

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[1] Autograph manuscript, dated and unsigned, record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/73. Also on the basis of the two previous letters (here at Nos. 37 and 38), the date of this report is obviously after 6 December 1916. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 36, of 26 December 1916 with the title 'Diary of a Second Journey' with some omissions and separated from the concluding part which, in the same issue of the *Arab Bulletin*, is published separately with the title 'Genesis of Hejaz Revolt' but only as a brief summary. From this report was also not published the final part with the profiles of the Feisal's Sherifs. Here I followed the original text. See Chapters XVIII and XIX of *Seven Pillars*. In the accompanying minutes dated 22 January 1917 to the *Appreciation of Attached Arabian Report*, n.s., n. XXV, 11 January 1917, commenting on the *Arab Bulletin* no. 36, the Undersecretary of State for India and Secretary in the Political Department Arthur Hirtzel (1870–1937), in a handwritten and initialled note included in the minutes, wrote: 'If time permits it is worth while to read in the Arab Bulletin Capt. Lawrence's diary pp. 548–551, for the sake of the local colour. AH.' Alongside this note, the recipient at the Foreign Office on 23 January comments: 'If the Hejaz gives us a good deal of anxiety, it gives us also much good reading! [indecipherable signature].'

When we got near, we saw through the palm-trees the flame and smoke of many fires, and the whole valley was full of shouting and rifle shots, and the roaring of camels. We rode past an end of the groves and turned up a narrow street, forced the door of the first empty house we came to, and led our camels inside to hide them while Abd el Kerim went off quietly down the street towards the noise to find out what was happening. He came back in half an hour to say that Feisul had just arrived in the village from Sueig with his camel-corps, and that I was to go to see him at once. So we led the camels out, and mounted again, and rode down the narrow lane between houses and the wall of a sunk garden on the right, pressing through a solid crowd of Arabs and camels, mixed up in the wildest confusion, and all shouting like mad.

At the end of the lane we came out suddenly on to the bed of Wadi Yenbo, as it ran between the palm-groves of Nakhl Mubarak and Bruka on the one side, and the hills of Wadi Safra on the other. It was a broad open space, very damp, for it had just flooded, with a few tamarisk and thorn trees in it, but now filled from side to side with Feisul's army. There were hundreds of watch-fires burning, with Arabs round them making coffee, or eating, or just sleeping, as well as they could in the confusion of camels. I have never seen so many camels together and the mess was indescribable as they were tied up or crouched here and there all over the camping ground, and more were ever coming up, and the old ones were leaping up to join them, and patrols were going out, and convoys being unloaded, and some dozens of Egyptian mules were bucking all over the middle of the picture.

We shouldered our way through all this din, and made our camels kneel down opposite Sherif Feisul, who was seated on a carpet in the wadi bed, reading reports and writing orders by the light of a lamp. The night was quite windless. With him was Sherif Sharraf, Kaimmakam of the Imaret and of Taif, his second in command, and Mulud ibn Mukhlus his Mosul A.D.C. I sat down with him (he received me very cordially, and apologised for the accommodation, which was not improved a minute later, when the hay-bales of a baggage camel behind Feisul's head came untied, and he, the lamp, Sharraf and myself were temporarily overwhelmed in an avalanche of hay) and listened to the news and petitions and complaints and difficulties being brought in and settled before him. The position was that the Turks, after clearing Zeid out of Wadi Safra, had come forward very fast to Wasta and Bir Said, and were threatening to advance rapidly on Yambo or Nakhl Mubarak, either to destroy Feisul, or to cut off his sea-bases. Feisul's spy-system was breaking down, and most wild and contradictory reports were coming in from one side and from another, about the strength of the Turks, and their movements. In the absence of news, he had moved suddenly down here, to watch the Yambo roads, with about 2,000 camel men, and 2,000 infantry, and had got in an hour before I came.

We sat on the rug talking till 4.30 A.M. It got very cold and the damp of the wadi rose up through the carpet and soaked our cloaks, and a white mist collected slowly over the whole camp, which gradually became quiet as the men and the camels all went to sleep, and the fires burnt out. Immediately north of us, rising out of the mist and quiet clear in the moonlight, was the eastern end of Jebel Rudhwa, which looks even more steep and rugged close by than it does from the sea. At about 4.30 Feisul decided that we should go to sleep, so we ate half a dozen dates, and stretched out on the very wet carpet on which we had been sitting. The Bisha men came up and spread their cloaks over him as soon as he had dropped asleep.

At 5.30 we got up (it was too cold to do anything else) and lit a fire of palm-ribs to warm ourselves. Messengers were still coming in from all sides, and the camp was not far off panic. Feisul decided to move then, partly to avoid the strong probability of being washed out next rain, and partly to occupy their minds. So everybody began to mount at once, and drew off to right and left, leaving a path for Feisul to ride up. He came along on a horse with Sherif Sharaf a pace behind him, and then his standard bearer (a splendid wild Arab with many luxuriant plats of hair) on a camel, and behind him all the mob of Sherifs and Sheikhs and household slaves – and myself – pell-mell. There was about 800 in the body-guard that morning.

We rode about up and down looking for a camping ground, and finally stopped on the further bank of a little side-wadi (the road to Yenbo), that runs down into Wadi Yenbo from the west, just north of Nakhl Mubarak village. On the south bank of this wadi (in whose bed I made a landing ground) was a raised slope, backed by some little rocky knolls, and beneath them Feisul pitched his camp. There were about 10 tents with headquarters, and the Egyptians had theirs too, so that the place soon looked business-like.

We stayed here two days, most of which I spent in Feisul's [here erased: camp] tent, and so I got a certain experience of his manner of command. The circumstances were very difficult, and the morale of his men was obviously suffering heavily under the scare reports brought in, and the defection of the Northern Harb. Feisul was fighting all these two days to keep up their spirits. He is accessible to any man who stands outside his tent till he is noticed, and never cuts short a petitioner. He hears every case, and if he does not settle it himself, calls one of his staff to settle it for him. His patience was extreme, and his self control rather wonderful. When Zeid's men came in to try and explain away the really shameful story of their surprise and retreat, he rallied them gently, and jested at them, chaffing them for having done this or that, for having inflicted such losses or suffered so much. He has got a very rich tenor voice, and uses it carefully in making speeches to his men, which he does in the broadest of Beduin dialects. I heard him speak to the Rifai sheikhs, when he sent them forward to picket the plain this side of Bir el Fagir. He told them quite quietly that the Turks were coming on, and that it was their duty to hold them up, and give God a victory: – adding that he hoped they would not go to sleep! The older men particularly were enthusiastic, and after saying that God would give him the victory, and then two victories, decided that his life would be prolonged, to enable him to accumulate an unprecedented number of victories!

Generally speaking, I thought the spirits of the infantry rather good, and those of the Juheina less firm; neither party was anything like so cheerful as the Harb and Juheina had been in Hamra a month before.

In the afternoon I walked round Nakhl Mubarak and Bruka, which are pleasant little mud villages, with very narrow streets, built on high earth mounds encircling their palm-gardens. Nakhl lies to the north, and Bruka 150 yards South of it across a thorny valley. I think each has about 300–600 houses, but it was very difficult to judge. The earth mounds round the villages were 50 feet high in places, and formed from the stuff dug out of the gardens, which are divided up into narrow plots by fences of palm-leaves, or by mud walls, and are watered from two or three narrow streams of sweet water running through them. The palms, very regularly planted and well cared for, are the main crop, but between the trunks are grown barley, radishes, cucumbers and marrows, and henna. The villages in the upper part of Wadi Yenbo have grapes.

The views from the little knolls behind our camp were very fine. Rudwa bore N 20° E – or the SE end of it did, and it seemed to be about 15 miles away. The whole time I was there, one part of it or another was wrapped in rain clouds, and it formed the most striking part of every outlook. Wadi Yenbo itself is a broad tree-covered plain, relieved by odd-coloured and odd-shaped rocks sticking out of its bed at intervals. It seemed to be about 2 miles wide, and runs up 40° E of N to the fork, where the Bugaa branch leaves the main stream. Bugaa is half Harb and half Juheinah. Mjeil, Madsus, Ain Ali and Shaatha are wholly Harb; the rest of the valley seems to be Juheina. Bir Said is Harb, and Hafira is Juheina. All the villages in the main bed of Wadi Yenbo are on its northern side. The water flows in little stone-lined channels underground from springs to villages.

Beyond the fork of the valley it was obvious that the country rose rapidly and got very hilly. The district behind Buwat is very high. Buwat itself stands on the watershed of Wadi Yenbo and Wadi Hamdh, and is about 12 miles [here erased: from] West of the station of Buwat.

Between Bruka and Bir Said is a long hollow valley, with an imperceptible watershed somewhere in the middle of it, at Bir el Fagir, a well surrounded by thick groves of acacia and tamarisk. On the left of this plain or valley is the great massif of hills bounding the Western edge of Wadi Safra, and on the right is Gebel Fijeij. Towards Bir Said are dunes of some height.

Wadi Yenbo itself runs first north and then west of Fijeij, to Milha and the sea near Masahali. It has no more sweet water in it, from Nakhl Mubarak to the thamila [Arabic for 'plain with wells'] at Masahali. Its right bank is made up of the low range of hills out of which Wadi Agida flows.

After the landing ground was finished I decided to come back at once to Yenbo, to instruct the aeroplanes on the ground they would have to reconnoitre. So at 9.15 P.M. on Dec. 4, I left Feisul's tent, on his own camel, on which I had also come. He paid £30 for it and it is a magnificent animal. Because of a scare of Turkish patrols we left the Agida road, and marched across the heads of its tributaries from the north by a very good and easy hard surfaced road, into Wadi Messarid, which led us down into the maritime plain at El Zuweida, an area that was, apparently, once cultivated. Bedr ibn Shefia rode with me, and we stopped nowhere. Reached Yenbo 3.30 A.M., very tired after three sleepless nights, and constant alarms and excursions during the days.

Feisul talked to me something about the genesis of the Arab rising. It was first imagined by his brother Abdulla, who reckoned that the Hejaz was capable of withstanding Turkey, with the aid of the Syrian and Mesopotamian armies, and our diplomatic help. He approached Lord Kitchener to this end, and obtained satisfactory assurances but the scheme was put off on Feisul's representing that Turkey was too strong for them. When the Great War broke out Sherif Hussein decided that this was his opportunity, and sent Feisul to Damascus to prepare the ground for a rising in Syria. He found the time inopportune, and reported to his father that further delay was necessary. Abdullah (whom Feisul calls Mifaud!) told his father that Feisul was afraid, and the revolt was ordered for June. The Sherif had been holding in the Beduin for some months, and telling them not to move till ordered.

Sherif Sharaf

A very sinister looking individual, for his left eye droops about a quarter of an inch. He is very silent, with a keen intelligent force, and obviously a good deal of character. His strong point is tribal custom, of which he has great knowledge, and he is said to be very capable in affairs, but cruel. He is acting as chief of staff, or adviser to Feisul – but appears to advise him very little.

The Shefic

Two brothers (there are others) Mohammed and Bedr ibn Shefia are very prominent in Feisul's entourage. Mohammed looks about 50, but is probably less, and is a very short, tubby, rather vulgar little man, with great commonsense and energy, and is rapidly making a name for himself as a practical man. Bedr is about 33, talks too much, but is affable also, but less the man of businness. They are Harb, but have lived for years in Wadi Yenbo, and do all their work among the Juheina.

Faiz el Ghusain

Talked to me a good deal about Feisul's negotiation with Nuri Shaalan. He went in the beginning of 1916 as Feisul's first emissary to Nuri and Nawaf, and knows them and their neighbors rather well. He was sent to Feisul to be passed up as an agent with the next messenger who came from Nuri, and in meanwhile (being a man of education) acting as Feisul's secretary.

He fell in with the Jauf scheme, though he thought Nuri would require a deal of persuading. However the patrol caravan has not started, as Feisul has no means of communication, and no messenger has come down since the patrol reached him. He left it at Kheif Hussein, so not much of it will survive the Arabs and the Turks!

Faiz thought that Fawai ibn Faig was by far the most intelligent of all Syrian sheiks, and the most powerful in the way which his tribesmen are only semi-nomadic, and are more likely to fight hard and collectively than the Rualla. Faway has his headquarters at Jize, but runs East whenever there is pasture. Faiz thought him very unlikely to enter into any premature scheme of co-operation with the Sherif or his allies: – and premature would mean without the backing of a disciplined force, or a deep threat of the British into Syria.

However as Faiz says, speculation at this distance is unprofitable, as we do not know the local conditions, and there are rumors of friction between the Syrian Beduin and the Turkish Government. He will keep us fully informed (via Feisul, if the airplane is unprofitable) as soon as he is able to get up.

Position at Yenbo

Feisul retired here with about 1500 men, the remain of his force, and Zeid brought in about 500. So we have 2000 men in all. The place is in a plain, and naval gunnery would be very effective. At present there is a monitor, besides patrol ships. Garland has sited trenches round the perimeter of the town, to be held by such troops as will hold a trench, and the 15 or 20 machine guns available with the ships landing parties are to do the rest. That place would not stand a regular attack, but should be proof against raids. If we had some armored cars we could keep the Turkish patrols 15 or 20 miles back in the plain. There is no water near Yenbo, so a besieging will not be a light one.

40. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (7 December 1916)

W. 825. Cipher. 7th

Following is from Lawrence. Begins: L. 28.

Feisul asks personal message conveyed C.-in-C., Egypforce:

"From Sinai Army, a mountain battalion, machine gun company, some heavy guns, three regiments of camel corps, and 30th infantry regiment, and from Syria, (+)? 130th, 42nd, and 55th Regts, also many details have come against me.

The relief to you should be great, but the strain upon us too great to endure. I hope your situation will permit you to press sharply on towards Beersheba, or feign landing in Syria, as seems best, for I think Turks hope to crash us soon, and then return against you."

Feisul emphasized he did not wish message delivered tritely, but in form you think most fit, hinting at unwisdom of exchange of textual notes between people who do not fully appreciate one another's situation, and obviously as referring to something specific. Nor very straight (?) or (?) (+) pleasant, but I infer Sherif has been offended, Lawrence, Ends.

Naturally the quicker the Sinai offensive begins in earnest, the quicker the Hejaz situation will be eased.

Addressed Sirdar, related Arbur [Arab Bureau].

(+) two groups indecipherable.

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41. *Lawrence (via Wilson) to Arab Bureau*[2] (7 December 1916)

W.838. 7th

Following is substance of message from Lawrence, original much mutilated. Begins:

"Weak Turkish mule mounted patrol advanced (?) into Wadi Safra, near Hamra, ten miles E. Of Kheif. Harb immediately fled, and Feisul says Harb will not rally for a week. Sherif Zeid with Egyptian force pushed towards Harm, to assist, but was stopped by machine guns effect their morale. Sherif Zeid with Egyptian force pushed towards Hamra, to assist, but was stopped by machine gun, retired to Mahsahali, and is now close to Yenbo. Turkish force, strength unknown, at Bir Said.

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[1] Typescript copy, with the caption 'W.825. Encrypted. 7 [December]' received and retransmitted by Wilson, from Jeddah to Cairo, on 7 December 1916, at 2pm and received in Cairo, at the Arab Bureau, the same day at 5.45pm, after being decrypted. Record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/74. The gaps in the transmission were probably due to the bad weather conditions of which Lawrence writes in Nos. 36 and 37. It is evident that Feisal, through Lawrence, solicited the sending of aid from the British.

[2] Typewritten copy received and retransmitted by Wilson, from Jeddah to Cairo at 11.00pm and received on 8 December 1916 at 2.55pm after being decrypted. Record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/75.

Abdul and perhaps Enver and Kazim, A.A.G., arrived Medina week ago and many reinforcements.

Feisul's information poor, and Mac (?) consequently he is unable to decide whether the Turks intend to raid Yenbo, attack him in Nail, or go for Rabegh and Mecca. Unreliable reports state they have food one month, which looks like latter, but Yenbo 'coup de main' also possible.

Faisal is holding his force about 5,000 together with his personal prestige, and though himself much depressed, keeps splendid; and he and his men fairly cheerful. Sherif Sharraf is with him but anxiously (?) advice. Newcombe's arrival will be very welcome.

It would be much assistance to me if Cairo telegraphs information as to whereabouts of 39th Regiment, also regarding Fakri Pasha's reported death, also regarding size of Turkish reinforcements and quantity of camels with Turkish force. Also where Sherif Abdulla is.

I have come to Yenbo request Feisul tell airplane where to fly from Yenbo. Aeroplane ground will be ready probably tomorrow. I made rough landing ground at Nail, but the places necessary were not recognized from map or description, and I hope if possible to go with first aeroplane myself as guide. Ends."

42. *Sherif Feisal's Army*[1] (11 December 1916)

At the end of November, Feisal decided to form a regular infantry force on the lines of that suggested for Sherif Ali by Aziz el-Masri. The battalions were to be composed, not so much of Nomads, as of their fellahs, poor men and slaves. They were to be formed into eight battalions each of 600 men, and by November 28th, several were already over 400 strong. Internal organisation consists of 20 men under one reis, and 5 reis (100 men) under each 'Sherif'. Ten 'Sherifs' to each battalion.

The battalions were contributed as follows:

1. Hudtheil (Mecca).
2. Ibn Shefia (Juheinah).
3. Rifaa (Juheinah).
4. Wuld Selim (Harb).
5. Bishawa (Asiris from Wadi Bishah).

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 34, 11 December 1916. Note from the Arab Bureau after Lawrence's text: 'No. 1 is the name of a tribe east of Mecca, along the Arafat road. No. 2 evidently drawn from the Shawafi clan of the Erwa, the chief sub-section of the Beni Malik Juheinah. No. 3 from another sub-section of the same section. No. 6 from the settled Juneinah. Nos. 4 and 7 are well known Harb units. The preponderance of Juheinah is due to the large proportion of settled cultivators in that tribe, so compared with the Harb.'

6. Ashraf (Juheinah).
7. Wuld Mohammed (Harb).
8. Muretteb of Ageyl and others.

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43. *Lawrence to Director Arab Bureau*[1] (Around 11 December 1916)

Director Arab Bureau

I am going down to Rabegh today to see Colonel Joyce and Major Ross.[2] I want to ask Colonel Joyce why he never sends me any information, and to get him to withdraw the Egyptian contingent, who are only a nuisance to us and the Arabs. I want to talk over the question of satisfactory air reconnaissance with Ross. He had four times tried to send a plane up here, and it has only once got through. That time its observation was a farce, so far as Yenbo was concerned, for he sent it up Wadi Safra from Beer to near Bir Abbas, and then back to Waset, and up through Jabr to Mijieil, and so down over N. Mubarak to Yenbo. It was the end of a four-hour flight when they reached Yenbo, and the last half-hour only was over an area of importance, and during that half-hour the men were too dazed to see anything. Also they only had the old map, and no notes on what places looked like, or what to look for. So they saw nothing, though they passed our Nakhl Mubarak during the battle.

I want then to come to Yenbo straight, and do their local reconnaissance on their way back to Rabegh, when we have primed them with what we want to know. If Ross cannot arrange this then the only thing to do will be to have a plane on Yenbo itself. The airplanes have been doing yeoman work these last two days, bomb dropping on Bruka, and scouring the county.

My position at Yenbo is a little odd. I wire to Colonel Wilson only, and got a letter from him to say that I was in charge of supplies at Yenbo. That is not possible, for Abd el Kader, as agent of Sherif Feisul, runs the supply question ashore, and our interference would not be welcome – and is not necessary. Whatever may be the position at Rabegh and Jidda, I can vouch that Yenbo is a most efficient-run show. All that a "supply officer" has to do is to hand on the way bills or whatever you call then, to Abd el Kader.

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[1] Autograph signed and dated 'December 1916' (illegible day but probably around the 11th), record no. FO/882/6 HRG/16/95. Published (partially) in Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 88.

[2] Lieutenant Colonel Pierce Charles Joyce (1878–1965) was Senior British officer responsible for armoured cars and the RFC flight and Commander of the British Section of the Arab Northern Army during the Arab Revolt. Lawrence speaks of him in *Seven Pillars* as one of the key personalities for the success of the Arab Revolt (Chapter XVI), underlining the excellent relations between them. Major A.J. Ross was the commander of Wing C of the British air force in the Hejaz (see WO 158/603, GHQ EEF, Operations to Assist Sharif, 1916 Oct.–Nov.). Lawrence also speaks of him with esteem in *Seven Pillars*. It is worth remembering that after the war ended, Lawrence secretly enlisted in the RAF with the name of Ross.

I regard myself as primarily intelligence officer, or liaison with Feisul. This was all right while Feisul was in the interior, as they seem settled to have no one but myself in there. Only he is now in Yenbo, half-besieged, and in these circumstances Garland is much more than I could be.

For one thing, he is senior to me, and he is an expert on explosives and machinery. He digs their trenches, repairs their guns, teaches them musketry, machine gun work, signaling: gets on with them exceedingly well, always makes the best of things, and they all like him too. He is quite alive to intelligence work also, though he has not been in contact enough with things or documents to know much outside the immediate area here. Anyway he is the best man for Yenbo, and while he is here, I am wasting my time walking about with him. That is really why I am going down to Joyce, to see if he can suggest anything worth doing.

Communications to and from Yenbo by wireless is very slow, for the naval work takes precedence, and Captain Boyle wires a great deal of naval stuff, as well as intelligence reports, based on notes picked up by his interpreter, and from various telegrams. The interpreter is an Egyptian, and is not good.

Feisul has now swung round to the belief in a British force at Rabegh. I have wired to you, and I see myself that his argument have force. If Zeid had not been so slack, things would never have got to this pars. The Arabs outside their hills, are worthless.

The reports attached has not been sent (except a very brief precis) to Colonel Wilson. If they are to be any good at all they should reach you with a reasonable period of despatch – and to send them to Jidda is only waste of a week or ten days. They would not add to Colonel Wilson information: and I have no means of duplicating them.
TELawrence

Garland has written to you suggesting he have a few days leave in Egypt. I hope this can be arranged for he has done most admirable work here, and just at present all that is at a standstill.
L.

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44. *Lawrence (via Wilson) to Arab Bureau*[1] (Around 12 December 1916)
W.873. Very urgent
Following from Lawrence: begins:
"L. 41. British troops for Rabegh. Sherif Feisal points out situation is entirely changed with loss of Wadi Safra. (Exigencies?) (?) obstacle of public opinion

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[1] Typescript, retransmitted by Wilson to the Arab Bureau in Cairo, sent from Jeddah on 12 December 1916 at 11.20am and received at 3.20pm, with the caption 'L.41'. Record no. FO 882/6 HRG /16/78 W.873. The gaps were due to difficulties in transmission and

amongst Harb and Juheina has disappeared with dispersal of these two tribes and everybody sees how serious Arab position is. Therefore it would be not bad towards the Ateiba and Bugum (eastern Road) and if he comes down himself settle British in, he is sure there would be no local opposition. Without such force Rabegh, first, he will not be free to develop attack on railway from Wejh to Medain Saleh, and, secondly, thinks that revolution may collapse in about three weeks time." Ends.

45. *Lawrence to Cornwallis*[1] (19 December 1916)

Dear Cornwallis,

Bearer is Faiz el Ghusain of the Salut (Jebeliyeh) tribe, who went to Man on a political mission from Feisul before the rebellion. [Autograph margin note by Lawrence: 'Capt. Boyle's stunt', miswritten instead of 'Royle'] He knows more of Hauran + its tribe than most people. He is come to Cairo to arrange publication of a diary of his journey from Djarbekir to Basra, during which he saw much of the Armenian massacres. I think it should interest the Arab Bureau. I like the man, and he has been useful to me. Will you help him if he needs anything in Cairo? Feisul is anxious he should not stay more that 10 or 14 days in Cairo, and he will depend on you for a return passage. His present post is A.M.S. to Feisul. Yours sincerely TELawrence

46. *Lawrence to Wilson*[2] (19 December 1916)

Colonel Wilson, Jeddah

I am taking the opportunity of Mr. Garland's leaving Yenbo for Cairo on leave to send you some notes on local conditions here. I hope it will be arranged that he returns here when his leave expires; his knowledge of tools

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reception. At the bottom, there are Wilson's considerations addressed to the Sirdar of Egypt with whom he cautiously espouses Lawrence's thesis. Only partially published in Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, pp. 100–01.

[1] Signed and dated 19.12.1916, on letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo', record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/82A. Kinahan C. Cornwallis (1883–1959) at the beginning of the war, was moved by Clayton to the Intelligence Cepartment and then to the Arab Bureau (1916), as Director after Hogarth. Faiz el Ghusein was one of Feisal's secretaries, mentioned in *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XIX: 'One of these was Faiz el Ghusein the adventurous.'

[2] Sent from Yenbo to Jeddah, typewritten, with autograph signature, dated '19.12.1916', record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/82B. Added: 'Notes by Colonel Wilson: Arab Bureau. Passed. Please send me a copy of this which I am sending by Sagh Garland. I am going to Yenbo on 25th or 26th. Rabegh, 21.12.16 C.E. Wilson. 2. Please call attention of the proper authorities to remarks re the Field Guns which Sagh Garland confirms. I trust Sagh Garland will be sent back to Yenbo as soon as possible; his work has been of the greatest value.' See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 100, partially.

and arms has been invaluable, and when Feisul is able to restore communication with the Hejaz Railway, it will be possible for him to go up there and direct his explosive parties personally. Everybody ashore likes him.

The currency question is becoming, to my mind, more serious. I believe a gold pound can now be obtained for about half its face value in Indian or other non-Turkish silver. I hope some steps will be taken soon to correct this, for at present our monthly subsidy does not appear to have its proper purchasing value, and it seems a pity to depreciate our gold coins wantonly. A remedy that would commend itself to business men in Yenbo is the introduction of a percentage of Indian silver rupees every month. A man on the M.31 (Monitor) here, obtained, I understand, two sovereigns in exchange for two Egyptian 20 piastre pieces to-day.

It would profit Yenbo, and probably Egyptian trade very shortly, if the Khedivial Mail could call at Yenbo on its way to Jidda. The monthly import into Yenbo of private goods (clothes and food) amounts now to just over £6000, and this would probably increase with increased facilities. The additional expense of the call to the Khedivial Co. could perhaps be made up?

Mr Garland will speak to you about the question of guns for the Sherif's troops. I personally feel strongly that the inferior quality of these troops demands a superfine technical equipment. They have not the tactical skill to make an inferior gun, by superior handling, equal to the better gun of their enemies. Unless we can give them weapons in which they have confidence they will not be capable of meeting the Turkish artillery. When with Feisul in November I wrote down to Colonel Parker, and asked for a battery of British field guns, latest pattern, with telescopic sights. The guns supplied to Feisul are two German-made fifteen-pounder guns, very much worn, without telescopic sights or range-tables, with defective fuses and ammunition, and lacking essential parts of elevating gear, etc. I think that a battery of used 18-pounders, with complete equipment, should be supplied to replace them.

Major Garland will also report to you on the present state of the Yenbo defences. They are unfinished, but I think show a creditable desire to be efficient. Bimb. Tewfik Bey has been sent up from Rabegh to act as Commandant de Place, and has done his best to be helpful to me.

I think the Arab forces have made a fair show. The night that Turks were rumoured to be within a few miles the garrison was called out about 10 p.m. by means of criers sent round the streets. The men all turned out without visible excitement, and proceeded to their posts round the town wall without making a noise, or firing a shot. This is in contrast to their usual waste of ammunition without excuse, and shows an intention of rising to an emergency. The sentries have also kept a fairly good watch, and the outpost lines have been maintained steadily by day and night, at considerable distances outside the walls. The attitude towards ourselves of the Syrian and

Mesopotamian officers in the army has been good. I have detected no signs of professional or political jealousy, except as regards the Egyptians.

Sherif Feisul has asked for the guns and equipment of the Egyptian battery to be transferred to him, when the Egyptian personnel is sent to Rabegh. I have arranged to except from the transfer the two German machine guns, which do not take the 303 ammunition of the other Maxims.

Sagh Garland has been most useful in all matters dealing with the Egyptians. I am sure that his presence here has prevented trouble.

There was a fight three days ago between 300 Ageyl and 400 Hadheyl, over a question of camels. About 1000 rounds were fired, and two men were killed and six wounded. The fight was checked by Feisul himself, who went out bare-headed and bare-footed, as he happened to be, and made peace at once. Some bullets struck the Monitor (M.31) in the harbour, and narrowly missed wounding or killing some of her crew. Sherif Feisul came off, when the matter was pointed out to him by Captain Boyle, and expressed his regret. The prompt quelling of the disturbance gives, I think, a good illustration of his personal prestige among his followers, since the affair was taking large proportions.

Rumours are current on the ships that British rifles can be bought cheaply ashore. I have tried to verify these, but without success and I think they are generally false, though isolated instances of men anxious to get rid of their arms may have occurred. The British rifle is highly prized.

T.E. Lawrence

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47. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (25 December 1916)

Colonel Wilson,

When Sherif Feisul heard of the advance of Sherif Ali from Rabegh Northward he at once pulled his force together, and from the 30th moved them out of Yenbo towards Hamra. His advance was accelerated by the news of the evacuation of Bir Said by the Turks and he sent Sidi Zeid down there at once with the Hudheil and Bisha contingents. The main body moved to Milha. On arrival there Sidi Feisul heard that the Juheina of Wadi Yenbo had made no attempt to move towards Waset. So he devolved his command on Sherif Sharaf, and rode up to Nakhl Mubarak unattended. In one night he had them convinced, and was moving forward with them, when he received news of Sidi Ali's retirement. He at once sent word to Zeid and Sharaf to fall back on Nakhl Mubarak, where he is now. Feisul's force was, when it left Yenbo, about 3,000 strong, of whom nearly 3,000 were mounted. The Juheina in

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[1] Sent from Yenbo, dated '25 December 1916', signed typescript, record no. Arbur 53/117 and FO 882/6 HGR/16/87.

Wadi Yenbo are about another 2,000, and he had odd patrols in other areas making his Southern force about 6,000 in all.

The Yenbo force was good in parts. The Hudheyl, Bisha, Ageil, and Achraf are good, as are some of Ibn Shefia's men. He had also a new unit of 59 mule cavalry, under Mulud Ibn Mukhlus, of Mosul, the cavalry officer who did the scouting before Shaiba for the Turks. He took with him the two fifteen-pounders (under Rasim Bey) and two 2.95 guns that had belonged to the Egyptian Artillery, also 12 machine guns (mule and camel) under Abdulla Bey.

The force travelled light: which meant that neither officers nor men took tents. Six days provisions were taken, and one baggage camel was allotted to every six men. The exact figures were:

Hedheyl 85 baggage camels
Bisha 61 baggage camels
Artillery 70 baggage camels
Machine guns 112 (including for escort of infantry)
Other units 283 (including for escort of infantry)

Sharaf still acts C.G.S. Zeid is second in Command, Barakat A.A.G. and Sheik Yusuf Chief Paymaster.

I should perhaps say that Barakat (Ibn Smeiyah) is a harass Sherif, and a noted pilgrim-purse cutter. Yusuf el Khushain is a Medina townsman, originally of Juheina stock.

T.E. Lawrence

48. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (25 December 1916)

Colonel Wilson, Sidi Feisul told me some things recently about Uzbashi Dhurmush with made me think that a note on him would interest Cairo.

Dhurmush (called in Ismailia and Tor Intelligence Reports, Garmush) is a Captain (now possibly an acting Bimbashi) of Turkish Gendarmerie, and has been since 1913 in command of the Gendarme district of Akaba. He was O.C. of the garrison there as late as October of this year, and probably is still there, though I have not seen any later report of his name.

His Akaba company used to be about 170 strong, and quite a proportion of the men were Syrians. About half used to have riding camels.

Dhurmush himself is aged about 30, about 5 feet 7 inches tall, very slightly built, with a small round head and delicate hands. Complexion nearly black, with a thin mustache. Hair is black curly wool. His appearance is strongly negroid, though he claims to be pure Arab, of a leading family of Shagga, inland of Kunfida. His insistency on the claim, and his profession lead me to suppose him the son of a slave-woman of some rich family of the neighbourhood. He speaks Assiri, Arabic, and a Syrian dialect also, and a little (very little) French. Is quite intelligent, polite and merry to talk to, and well disposed towards foreigners. He is also very keen on his profession, and rides a camel like an archangel.

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[1] Sent from Yenbo on 25 December 1916, dated and signed typescript, record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/88.

Feisul now tells me that Dhurmush came, at his request, to Damascus in April 1916, and was sworn in there into Arab Society. He regards him as entirely trustworthy, and devoted to the Sherif's cause: when there is a Sherif's cause in the North.

I hope that no premature attempt will be made to open up communication with Dhurmush from Egypt. He is a Sherifian, and will not respond to our own advances: and it would be a pity to get him hanged by being previous. He was always very pleasant to me. When the moment comes he should be given a letter from Feisul.

T.E. Lawrence

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49. *Lawrence to Cornwallis*[1] (27 December 1916)

Dear K.C.

It has been very good of you to send there two wires about Abd el Kadir's son. The man is more than grateful, and I am sure that he deserves it! He does everything in Yenbo, and is the best disposed person towards us I have struck. I fear I am irregular and bad in reporting things to you. There has been so little worth sending of late.

If I am to stay here I will need all sorts of things. Have you any news of Newcombe? The situation is so interesting that I think I will fail to come back. I want to rub off my British habits and go off with Feisul for a bit. Amusing job and all new country. When I have someone to take over here from me I'll go off. Wadi Ain is the unknown area of N. Hejaz, and I want to drop up and see it – anything behind Rudhwa will be worth while.

I enclose a file of papers: will you distribute to the wise and the foolish?

The map corrections are filthy, but I got so tired of making copies for everyone that you get only the original – unless the Flying people performed according better promises and sent you a proper copy. However Dowson will, inshallah, make it out. I want it embodied, not in 3rd Edition Medina-Mecca, but in the 1st Edn. Medina. A map showing Wejh and the Railway is an absolute necessity. Hogarth will find you Huber or Wallin-Burton is the other source. Let it be the full size and shape of the final sheet.

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[1] Sent from Yenbo (?) on 27.12.1916, dated and signed manuscript, on letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo, Telegrams. Arbur Cairo, Telephone 5595 5516'. Record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/90A. The letter begins in pen and ends in pencil. A typewritten copy is also preserved, record no. FO 882/6 HRG/16/90B. See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 102.

The 3rd Medina-Mecca will then be a future issue, including probably a further revise of the Wadi Yenbo, and the new R.F.C. work Fura-Gaha, etc. Ask Dawson to press the drawing of the Medina sheet. It should be very rough and sketchy.

Am glad Bray[1] is back. I wonder the next week will bring forth, here and there. Somehow I do not believe in a Turkish advance on Mecca, though they could, if they wished.

Wilson will send you a note on Dhurmush of Akaba. About Faiz, I thought you would try to bag him: he is a very unusual person. Don't get him caught by the Turks as a spy!

Send me a Hejaz Handbook some day, and an Arab Bulletin later than 31. You know they had no copy of my route-notes in Rabegh. They would have been useful to R.F.C.

Wedgwood Benn[2] of the Ben Mychree has got 200 negatives of the Muller party murdered near Jidda. They include a lot of Yemen things. Get them, if you can. Limbery gave them to him.
T.E.L.

Will you get from Citadel[3] and send down to Abd el Kadir a leather portfolio of E. Government Pattern. It should be 3 times as long as this paper is high. Present from me
TEL

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50. *Lawrence to R. Fitzmaurice*[4] (2 January 1917)

S.N.O. Yenbo.

Sherif Feisul moves tomorrow (Jan 3) to Owais [added above the first line:] not on map; NNE of Yenbo about 15 miles, where he will stay 3 days. On Jan 7 he hopes to reach Hudharia, and on Jan 10 Um Lejj.

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[1] Major Norman Napier Evelyn Bray (born 1859), intelligence officer of the 18th Bengal Lancers, was attached to the Arab Bureau in 1916 to help Wilson to coordinate the intelligence network.

[2] William Wedgwood Benn (1877–1960) was an RFC officer who had operated in Gallipoli with aerial reconnaissance assignments. He served as Secretary of State for India (1929–31). The HMS *Ben-my-Chree* was a packet steamer built for the Isle of Man, adapted for naval purposes and capable of carrying seaplanes; sent to Aden in 1916, she was sunk by the Turks in 1918 near the Greek island of Kastellorizo.

[3] The fortress built in the centre of Cairo by Salāh al-Dīn (Saladin) between 1176 and 1183, used as a military garrison by the British.

[4] Handwritten, signed and dated 'Nakl Mubarak 2.1.1917', MS Eng 1252, (352) Houghton Library, Harvard University. Fitzmaurice adds: 'I was at NO Yenbo at this time in *Espiegle*

From Um Lejj it is 5 days to Wejh: – but he will first get into contact with Sherif Abdulla, [erased here: and] clear the interior of Turkish patrols, [added between the lines] and make terms with local Sheikhs. etc., so no timetable beyond [erased here: Wejh] Um Lejj is possible at present. Arrangements for the advance on Wejh will be made at Um Lejj.

He wishes to send 1200 men by sea to Um Lejj about January 4, as advance guard to make preparations. The rest of the force will move by land.

Um Lejj will be a semi-permanent base for Sherif Abdulla, and a temporary base for Sherif Feisul. This will involve the landing of considerable quantities of stores, some of which will be from Egypt, and some from Yenbo. All the preliminary amounts will come from Yenbo: – and I think a ship of the Arethusa or Fisher class should be detailed for temporary "ferry" duty between Yenbo and Um Lejj. A W.T. ship at Um Lejj will also become important. As Um Lejj is already in Arab hands no [erased here: warship] assistance from naval guns should be necessary till near Wejh.

I would be much obliged if you would send Captain Boyle what you think fit of the above – and send the following telegram to Colonel Wilson at Rabegh in Jedda.
TELawrence

Colonel Wilson Rabegh or Jidda
L.75. Feisul hopes [erased here: arrive with main body] concentrate at Um Lejj January 10: asks sea transport for advance guard twelve hundred men from Yenbo about January 4. Um Lejj will be base Abdulla and Feisul, and stores will be moved thither from Yenbo. Suggest Fisher class steamer be tentatively retained for ferry duty Yenbo-Um Lejj from January 8 for about a week. Patrol ship advisable for wireless. Lawrence

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51. *Intelligence Report*[1] (4 January 1917)

Later information, received from Sherif Feisal, states that the Subh, although they have detached themselves from Sherif Ali, have not gone over to the Turks, but are scattered among the hills. Feisal, who was at Nakhl Mubarek on 29 December, with some Juheinah, is in no way depressed by the situation. The Turks are still consolidating their positions along the line Kheif, Hamra, Bir Said, where the bulk of the 55th Regiment still appears to be. They are reported as far south as Huseiniyah, below Wasta, in Wadi Safrah, but only

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R.F.' Captain Raymond Fitzmaurice (1878–1943) was in command of HMS *Espiegle*, serving under Admiral Wemyss in support of the Arab Revolt. See *Seven Pillars* Chapter XXIX: 'He helped us in a thousand ways; above all in signalling; for he was a wireless expert'.

[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 37, 4 January 1917. The informations summarized here clearly came from Lawrence.

on reconnaissance. There are reasons for believing that the evacuation by the Turks of the Ghayir district recently reported by aeroplane observers is incorrect, and that the Turks are still in that neighbourhood. They are still endeavouring to get supplies from central Arabia. An Arab NCO deserter from the Turks, who had reached Yambo, states that forage is short, but that food is adequate; also that there is an average of two short trains (ten trucks in all) a day into Medina, but on some days no train arrives. The Turks had, in September, a company of infantry at Tebuk and one at Medain Salih, and a German doctor at the latter place. The railway in the Medina section is guarded by 1,500 Muhafza Tabur under El-Rahman. He says Fakhri Pasha, the GOC of the Expeditionary Force, is returning to Medina shortly, after visiting Nakhl Mubarek, Hamrah and Ghayir, leaving Ghalib Bey in command at Hamrah. At Nakhl Mubarek he found our seaplanes too active, and withdrew to Bir Said. The Turks have a large supply-dump at Bir Derwish. Feeling among the Turks runs strongly against the Sherif, and a reward has been offered for the capture of the British officer (Capt. Lawrence) who is with Feisal.

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52. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (5 January 1917)

Colonel Wilson (copy sent: this direct Cairo to save time.)

I have just come in from Feisul, and the Race Fisher is leaving in half an hour. So I am sending hurried note on Northern Politics.

As I reported to Captain Brey, Ibn Sheddad, Feisul's self-appropriate messenger to the North (he is a Beni Wahab sheikh) left about Nov. 15 for Juan. He got there in 12 days hard riding, without incidents. In Jauf he formed Nuri, Nawaf, Faway, and Sinaitan. They had a committee meeting and came to the decision that they would break off all relations with the Turkish government at once. They will not however commit themselves to an action policy, until Feisul has established himself at El Ula, and has opened of direct communications with them. This involves his recouping Teima and blocking out Shammar Ghazzua – which Nawaf will not undertake. Teima is held by Abu Rumman for Ibn Rashid with seven men: – and offers to surrender to eight – but Nawaf will not move against Ibn Rashid as yet.

The reasons that influence the Oueza sheiks are those of ammunition (they have Martini and Gras guns) barley, and weather. Juan produces enough dates for the tribe, and some over, which are sent to Damascus. El Ula is the first possible point with which they can have direct contact with supplies from the Sherif.

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[1] Sent from Yembo on 5 January 1917, autograph signed and dated on letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo, Telegrams: Arbur, Cairo, Telephone: 5595, 5615', record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/1. Published, incompletely, in Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 104.

The tone of the message sent by Nuri and Nawaf to Feisul is excellent. They are quite ready to do their work, as soon as it gives a few chance of success.

Nawaf aims at the eventual conquest of Hail, for himself, with the help of the Sherif, and an overlordship for his family over the combined Rualla – Shammar blocks. It is, I think, understood that this is the price of his assistance. The Sherif looks forward to the establishment of a North Arabia Inviate to check Ibn Saoud and control the roads of the Hamad-Nefudh, as a distinct benefit to the peace of Arabia – also as another step in the process of substituting a few heads for a multitude of conflicting tribes. The Sheddad said that it would be quite impossible, under present conditions of road, to send patrol to Juan from here. It would be looted inevitably. Please warn Royce also that the S'gour to the SW of Juan and the Sherarat NW are both hostile to Nawaf and dangerous to travelers.

We intended to stay at Juan some weeks.

Feisul will not send Ibn Sheddad North again except from El Ula, when he has reached there himself. Matters stand our till then.

I will get from Feisul when I see him next letters for Fazi in the sense of Arbur telegram 539. Please try and arrange a successor to Fazi, when possible, as he will go forward from El Ula. I hope you will avoid our share in things as far as possible in his letters.
TELawrence

Feisul asks for
10 valises and flea-bag (for himself and staff: it is very cold here)
1 attaché case (a better case with two locks about 18 inch long and flat, for confidential papers)
1 sleeping tent, for himself. To be small and double if possible: big enough for a bed and sitting ground for five or six people round a tray. We all feed in his tent together. The Survey can make this tent, if now are available. Strong ropes, and double set legs, iron and wood.
3 batteries of Q.F. Mountain guns.
1 battery of 18 pounders
[A large square bracket on the left in which TEL added:] All recommended by me and urgent.
Also please send me 4 sets of 1/250.000 of Syria, and 1/500.000 Maan etc. (Maps). Also one R.G.S. 1/2.000.000 Syria Mesopotamia etc.
TEL

53. *Lawrence to Director Arab Bureau*[1] (7 January 1917)

(Colonel Wilson Jidda) (copy sent Jidda: this for action please TEL)
Director Arab Bureau

I have been much too busy lately to write the notes I intended to do on my last visit to Nakhl Mubarak and Nagb Dhifran.

Enclosed the lamp bill. I have kept the money as I did not see any easy way to transmitting it to you.

Will you please send me some needles for picking open the jits. The lamp will not work without them.

Ab el Kadir asks that his son buy him a kit-bag (leather) of as large a size as is obtainable. Also a camp bed. He will pay for them on receipt of bill, supposing his son has already started, and you can give the commission to someone else.

Shellal, the Ageyl is dealt with in a separate letter.

Please send a spare sparkling-plug for the Triumph motorcycle supplied me. The plug sent with it was old and defective!

The advance on Wejh has made very difficult by the shortage of camels. Feisul had 1000 baggage camels in Wadi Safra: when Zeid fled there went South to Rabegh. Feisul was left with 450, and Abdulla has just asked for 250 camel-loads of stuff to be sent to W. Ais for him at once. So Feisul has not enough left for his own transport, and sea-carriage is difficult for lacks of ships, and because of the unsatisfactory nature of Um Leij harbour. I am afraid things are going to be rather held up.

The Rahala have just sent in 3 camel loads of captured Turkish rifles!

TELawrence

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54. *Route Notes*[2] (8 January 1917)

On January 2nd 1917 I left Yanbo and rode across the plain to the mouth of Wadi Agida in five hours. From the mouth of Wadi Agida to the watershed into the Wadi Yenbo basin was an hour and thence to Nakhl Mubarak was an hour: all done at a 4 mile an hour walk. The lowest third of the ascent of Wadi Agida was over sand: soft, slow going. The upper parts were harder and better: the divide was low and easy, and it gave at once to the eastward on to a broad open valley coming from the left with only very low hills on each side (Jebel Agida?) down which the road curved gently into Nakhl Mubarak. The "Sebil" stands about 400 yards east of the watershed.

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[1] Sent from Yembo on 7 January 1917, to Colonel Wilson in Jeddah. Autograph signed and dated on letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo, Telegrams: Arbur, Cairo, Telephone: 5595, 5615', record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/2.

[2] Typescript signed, dated 'Yembo 8.1.1917', record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/3. Published partly in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 42, 15 February 1917, with the title 'With the Northern Army'. The printed text omitted several passages and the entire report had been divided into paragraphs according to the headings used by Lawrence. I followed the original document here. In the publication in the *Arab Bulletin* was preceded by the indication: 'The following are excerpts from a Report made by Captain T. E. Lawrence to Lt. Colonel Wilson on January 8, 1917.' See Chapter XIX of *Seven Pillars*; part of this text was included only in the 1922 Oxford Edition. Here I have followed the original typescript.

The road down to Nakhl Mubarak looked very beautiful today. The rains have brought up a thin growth of grass in all the hollows and flat places. The blades, of a very tender green, shoot up between all the stones, so that looked at from a little height and distance there is a lively mist of pale green here and there over the surface of the slate – blue and brown-red rocks. In places the growth was quite strong, and the camels of the army are grazing on it.

In Nakhl Mubarak I found Feisul encamped in tents: he himself was in his private tent, just getting ready to go out to his reception. I stayed with him that day, while rumours came in that the Turkish force had evacuated Wadi Safra. One reported that from Bir Sheriufi to Bir Derwish was one great camp, and that its units were proceeding to Medina; another had seen a great force of camel men and infantry ride East past Kheif yesterday. We decided to send out a feeler towards Hamra, to get news.

On January 3rd. I took 35 Mahamid and rode over a dull tamarisk and thorn grown plain past Bir Fagir (not seen) to Bir Wasit, which is the old Abu Khalaat of my 1st trip. We waited there till sunset, and then went to Bir Murra, left our camels with 10 of the men, and the rest of us climbed up the hills north of the Haj-road, up to Jebel Dhifran, which was painful, for the hills are all of knife-like strata, turned on edge, and often running in straight lines from crest to valley. It gives you abundance of broken surface but no sound grips, as the strata are so minutely cracked that almost any segment will come away from its socket in your hand.

The top of Dhifran was cold and misty. At dawn we disposed ourselves in crevices of the rocks, and at last saw three bell tents beneath us to the right, behind a spur at the head of the pass, 300 yards away. We could not get round to them to get a low view – so put a few bullets through their top. This turned out a crowd of Turks from all directions. They leaped into trenches and rifle pits each side of the road, and potting them was very difficult. I think they suffered some loss, but I could not be sure. They fired in every direction except towards us, and the row in the narrow valley was so awful that I expected to see the Hamra force turn out: as the Turks were already 10 to our one this might have made our getting away difficult, so we crawled back and rushed down into a valley, almost on top of two very scared Turks, who may have been outposts or may have been doing a rear. They were the most ragged men I have ever seen, bar a British tramp, and surrendered at once. We took them with us, and bolted off down the valley for another 500 yards. From there we put a few shots into the Turks, which seemed to check them, and so got off gently to Bir Murra by 6.30 a.m. The prisoners could only speak Turkish, so we mounted them, and raced up to Nakhl to find an interpreter. They said it was the 5th Coy of the 2/55th Regiment which was posted on Dhifran: the rest of the battalion and two companies of the first battalion were at Hamra village. The other two companies of the 1/55th were guarding the Derb el-Khayaa from Hamra to Bir Ibn Hassani; 3/55th in Bir Derwish O.C. 55th Regiment, Tewfik Bey. (These details were sent by wire on 6th Jan.)

At Nakhl Mubarak I found letters from Captain Warren saying that Zeid was still in Yambo, and that the "Dufferin" would wait in Sherm Yambo till I came. As Feisul was just starting for Owais I changed my camel and rode down with him and the army to the head of Wadi Messarid by 3 P.M. The order of march was rather splendid and barbaric. Feisul in front, in white; Sharaf on his right in red headcloth and henna dyed tunic and cloak; myself on his left in white and red. Behind us 3 banners of purple silk, with gold spikes; behind them 3 drummers playing a march, and behind them a wild bouncing mass of 1200 camels of the bodyguard, all packed as closely as they could move, the men in every variety of coloured clothes, and the camels nearly as brilliant in their trappings – and the whole crowd singing at the tops of their voices a war song in honour of Feisul and his family! It looked like a river of camels, for we filled up the Wadi to the tops of its banks, and poured along in a quarter of a mile long stream.

At the mouth of Wadi Messarid I said goodbye to Feisul and raced down the open plain to Yambo by 6 p.m. I was riding Feisul's own splendid camel, and so managed to do the 22 miles fairly easily. To my great relief I found the "Dufferin" had already left for Rabugh with Zeid, and so I was saved a further ten miles' march to Sherm Yambo to see her Captain. It makes things difficult when one's S.N.O. lives so far off.

Arab Forces.

The troops in Nakhl Mubarak were mostly camel corps. There were very many – according to Feisal's figures, over 6,000 – but their camps were spread over miles of the Wadi and its tributaries, and I could not manage to see all of them. Those I did see were quiet, and I thought in fair spirits. Some of them have now served six months or more, and these have lost their enthusiasm but gained experience in exchange. They still preserve their tribal instinct for independence of order – but they are curbing their habit of wasting ammunition, have achieved a sort of routine in matters of camping and marching, and when the Sherif approaches near they fall into line and make the low bow and sweep of the arm to the lips which is the official salute. They do not oil their guns – they say because they then clog with sand, and they have no oil handy! – but they are most of them in fair order, and some of the men know how to shoot. They are becoming separate but coherent units under their Sheikhs, and attendance is more regular than it was, as their distance from home increases. Further they are becoming tempered to the idea of leaving their own diras, and Feisul hopes to take nearly all to Wejh with him. As a mass they are not formidable, since they have no corporate spirit or discipline, or mutual confidence. Man by man they are good: I would suggest that the smaller the unit that is acting, the better will be its performance. A thousand of them in a mob would be ineffective against one fourth their number of trained troops: but three or four of them, in their own valleys and hills, would account for a dozen Turkish soldiers. When they sit still they get nervous, and anxious to return home. Feisul himself goes rather to pieces in the same conditions. When, however, they have plenty to do, and are riding about in small parties tapping the Turks here and there, retiring always when the Turks advance, to appear in another direction immediately after, then they are in their element, and must cause the enemy not only anxiety, but bewilderment. The mule mounted infantry company is very promising. They have got Mulud, an ex-cavalry officer, training them, and already make a creditable appearance. The machine-gun sections were disappointing. They say that the Egyptian volunteers are improving these and the artillery details.

Camp life.

The camp routine at HQ, is much as follows. At 5 a.m. the Army "Imam" gets on to the best hill-top and calls to prayer. He has an astonishing voice, and wakes up every man and animal in the camp. Immediately after him Feisul's private Imam calls gently and musically by his tent. A few minutes later a cup of sweet coffee turns up, for each of us (Feisul has five slaves), and at 6 a.m. or a little later we go to breakfast with Feisul in his tent, where he has two modern, but not bad carpets, and a delightful old Baluch prayer rug. Breakfast in favourable moments may include Mecca cakes and cooked dhurra besides dates: after breakfast two little glasses of sweet tea are produced for each of us. From after breakfast till 8 a.m. Feisul works with his secretary, or discusses things privately in his tent with important people. At 8 a.m. he gives audience in his diwan tent, which is furnished with two bad kilims. The routine is for him to sit at the end of it, with one side, and callers or petitioners sit in front of the tent in a half circle, until he calls them up to him. All questions are settled very summarily, and nothing is left over till later. At 11.30 a.m. he rises, and walks back to his living tent, where a little later we collect for lunch. Lunch again, on fortunate days, consists of several dishes: stewed thorn-buds, beans or lentils, with bread, and afterwards rice or honey cakes. They eat with fingers or spoons, as pleases them. After lunch comes short delay of talk, while coffee and sweet tea turn up. Then till two Feisul writes, or dictates letters, or sleeps. From two till 4.30 p.m. he again sits in the reception tent and disposes of the afternoon cases. From 4.30 to sun-set (5 p.m.) he often walks about, or sits outside and talks to a few Chiefs. From 5 till 6 he gives private audience in his living tent to necessary people, and discusses the night's reconnaissance and duties, for most field work is done in the dark. About 6 p.m. comes the evening meal, like lunch, but with large fragments of sheep crowning the rice heap. After it comes intermittent glasses of sugared tea till bed time, which may not be till late hours. He sees all sorts of people at this time; his servants bring them in one by one, according to their business. If there is not much doing, he sends out for some local Sheikh, and discusses with him the country round about, roads, tribal histories, etc., or simply tells us stories of what he saw in Syria, Turkish secret history, or family affairs.

Feisul's Table Talk.

Talking one day about the Yemen, as they call anything South of Mecca and Jiddah, he remarked on the great docility and reasonableness of the Southern tribes, compared with the Aarb, Juheinah and Ateibah of the North. He said that no Arabs of his knowledge were so easily to hold and to rule. To imprison an officer his Sheikh had only to knot a thin string about his neck, and state his sentence, and the man would henceforward follow him about, with protestations of innocence and appeals to be set at liberty. Another good custom is that of naming boy or girl children after a favoured guest. They then belong literally to their name father, who can dispose their actions as he pleases, to the exclusion of parental authority; they even incur their part-responsibility of the blood feuds of the name parent. He was down there, from Taif to Birk, and inland to Ibha, for months, and says that now whole tribes of boys are called Feisul, and that, over them and indirectly over their fathers, he has wide personal influence. Particularly he spent four months fortifying Muhail for the Turks, and made great friends of Suleima ibn Ali and his family. He says that, given ten days leave, he would undertake to raise every fighting man in Asir against Muhieddin. Ibh he says is not formidable to an attacking force with a battery of field guns. The present bar on action is that Nasir is not weighty enough to counterpoise the Idrisi. The tribes all believe that Idrisi would egg on his friendly Sheikhs to attack them in the rear, if they moved openly against the Turks. The presence of Feisul or Abdulla would allay these fears.

Feisal says that Abdulla, though quick when he does move, is rather luxurious in taste, and inclined to be lazy.

Stotzingen told Feisul in Damascus that, from the Yemen, arms and ammunition were to be shipped across to Abyssinia, and an anti-foreign war begun in that country. He himself was going afterwards to German East Africa.

Frobenius (calling himself Abd el Kerim Pasha) turned up in Jidda one morning by sea from Wejh soon after war had begun. Feisul was in Jidda, and headed him off from Mecca. British Naval activity dissuaded him from going on further south. Feisul, therefore, got him a boat, and gave him a letter of recommendation, and sent him back north again. When he got to Rabegh, however, Hussein Mabeirig took suspicion of him and locked him up in the fort. Frobenius had some difficulty in getting out, and made great complaints of his treatment when he got back to Syria.

In March 1916, Jemal Pasha took Feisul to a cinema in Damascus. The star film showed the Pyramids, with the Union Jack on top, and beneath them, Australians beating the Egyptian men, raping the women, and, in the foreground, an Egyptian girl in an attitude of supplication. The second scene showed a desert, with camel convoys and a Turkish infantry battalion marching on for ever and ever. The third scene returned to the Pyramids with a sudden appearance of the Ottoman Army in review order, the killing of the Australians, and the surrender of General Maxwell, the joy of Egypt, the tearing down of the British flag from the pyramids, and its replacement by the Turkish flag. Feisul said to Jemal: "Why go on troubling my father and myself for recruits for your army if this film is true?" Jemal said: "Well, you know it encourages the people. We do not expect or try to conquer Egypt yet. Out policy is to hold the British forces there with the least cost to ourselves – and Germany has promised us that the last act of the war shall be the conquest of Egypt by Germany and its restoration to the Ottoman Empire. On these terms I agreed to join her in arms."

Oppenheim came to see Feisul in Constantinople in early 1915. He said he wanted to make rebellions. Feisul asked of what and why. Oppenheim said there were to be rebellions of Moslems against Christians. Feisul said the idea was sound. Where did he propose to start them? Oppenheim said, "everywhere" in India, Egypt, the Sudan, Java, Abyssinia, North Africa. Feisul said they might consider India first. There was the technical difficulty of lack of arms. Oppenheim said that would be put right by a German-Turk expedition into Persia: he asked if the Sherif would be prepared to co-operate with the Indian Moslem societies. Feisul said his father would want to know whether, afterwards, the Indian Moslems would be independent and supreme: or would Hindus rule them, or India fall to another European power? Oppenheim said he had no idea: that it was previous to think so far ahead. Feisal said he was afraid his father would want to know all the same. Oppenheim said, "Very well, how about Egypt? We can arrange to give your family office there, when it is conquered." Feisul quoted the Koran to the disparagement of Egyptians, and said that he had lately been in Egypt, and had been offered the crown by the Nationalist party. This took place in Piraeus. Egyptians were weather cocks, with no political principle except dissatisfaction, and intent only on pleasure and money getting. Any Egyptian who talked of raising a rebellion in Egypt was trying to touch you for something on account. Oppenheim said, "Well then, the Sudan" Feisul said, "Yes, you are right. There is in the Sudan material to cause a real rebellion: but do you know the Sudan?" Oppenheim said, "Why" Feisul said, "They are ignorant negroes, armed with broad bladed spears, bows and shields. He, who would try to stir them up against the English and their rifles and machine-guns, is no good Moslem. The men, however, are sound material. Give me arms, money and the command of the Red Sea for about six weeks, and I shall be Governor General of the Sudan." Oppenheim has hardly spoken to him since.

In January 1915, Yasim, Ali Riza, Abd el-Ghani, and others approached the Sherif of Mecca and suggested a military rebellion in Syria. The Sherif sent Feisul up to report. He found Divisions 25, 35 and 36 ready to revolt, but public opinion less ready, and a general opinion in military circles that Germany would win the war quite rapidly. He went to Constantinople, and waited till the Dardanelles was in full blast. He then came back to Damascus, judging it a possible moment – but he found the well disposed divisions broken up, and his supporters scattered. So he suggested to his father that they delay till England had been properly approached, and Turkey had suffered crippling losses, or until an Allied landing had been effected at Alexandretta.[1]

[. . .] between Biar Ali and Bir Derwish, each post of about 10 to 30 men. This improved our conditions, but the posts were difficult to feed and lately the Mohafiz Tabur was sent forward to guard the roads west of Bir Abbas, and their posts have been replaced by posts of the Turks among the camel men. This means that most of the drivers are now Arabs from Medina and Syria. The N.C.Os are Turks and the officers.

In Medina there is a battalion of Gendarmes. At Biar Ali are no troops. At Bir Derwish are two battalions. The aeroplane that fell in Medina (whose pilots were given a public funeral) was a large biplane. There is still there a monoplane that flies about the town and sometimes to Biar Ali (Dec. 30th). Of late only two trains a week have been arriving in Medina. They are about 15 trucks each. Fodder is nearly unobtainable since Nedj communications were cut and food is both scarce and dear. The civil population hide their supplies and the Military commandeer all they find. Takruris and Moors resident in Medina have been pressed for military service, but not the natives of the town itself. 80 prominent people have been deported, including some Indian Mohammedans: and large gallows have been built of stone and iron. No one has yet been hanged.

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[1] In the original, the report continued with the following text, not published in *Arab Bulletin*. The lower half of the previous page (15 in Lawrence's numbering), after the word Alexandretta, is cut off and the report continues to the next page, number 16, picking up a conversation that had started previously.

The Rahala, Redada, Mahmid, have been sending in small contributions of Turkish rifles, and captured camels lately. The rifles (taken from the camel guards) are usually Russian with Turkish back sight. Lately in a more important fight that usual the Rahala captured 45 rifles and buried 35 men of a Turkish Patrol. This occurred about Dec. 31st.

At Maan, near the station, is a boat, described as a large ships boat brought to Maan in winter 1915–1916 for Akaba. It was in Maan in June 1916.
T.E. Lawrence
Yenbo 8.1.17.

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55. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (8 January 1917)
Colonel Wilson.
Following story was told me by Feisul in confidence. I hope you will respect the condition. It seems to me rather illuminating talk. I made notes as he told me. "When I went to Rabegh Colonel Brémond asked me to visit him on the Haj. I thought I would not go, but Colonel Wilson said 'Subhan Allah', why on earth not? – so I went. I met the Colonel Brémond and Cadi, and we complimented one another on the honour and pleasure mutually felt. After enough of this, to test my ground, I made a short speech in honour of France. This was well received: – and so I developed the idea gradually, saying I was assured that France, the mother of manners, the banner of liberty, the refuge of the oppressed, the creator and patron of the ideal of nationality, must be looking with all her sympathy and hope towards the first struggles of the Arab people, after six centuries of Turkish tyranny, to win for themselves a little of the joy and freedom of Western Europe. The history of France had been an inspiration for us, and I was glad to find myself in communion with the great current of French feeling, fighting beside them and for them in a Holy War against the common enemy. My father, I knew, agreed with me. I hoped that

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[1] Sent (probably from Yembo) on 8 January 1917, typescript signed and dated, registered in IOR/L /PS/10/615 3372/16 no. 1000 for sending to 'Secret Department'. The following text was only forwarded on 10 February 1917 by Wilson to General Reginald Wingate who had just succeeded Henry McMahon as High Commissioner for Egypt. Wilson attached this text to a long series of considerations on France's position towards the Arab Revolt, evidently as a useful piece of support. In fact, he writes: 'I attach an extract from an official secret report from Lawrence giving an account of an interview Brémond had with Faisal, I have no reason to doubt the main facts as recorded chiefly because I – knowing Faisal – cannot believe that he would make up such a story'. On 11 February 1917 Wingate passed it on to the Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour. Only on 3 March 1917 did Balfour transmit the report to the Undersecretary of State for India Arthur Hirtzel who immediately replied on 5 March adding a handwritten note: 'Col. Wilson, knowing Feisal, is satisfied that the story in Capt. Lawrence's report is not a fiction.' A further handwritten note by the British Foreign Office commented: 'I Think this is a true story – perhaps coloured a little by the prepossessions or dislikes of Feisal.' Final signature is corrected by hand from 'G.' to 'T.'

Colonel Brémond felt glad that Arab leaders had realised that the Arabs, in their humble way, were helping to secure for France the coveted provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, just as France at Verdun was confirming Arabia for the Arabs.

I said that the Arabs were doing their best, but that they were an old and broken people, lacking all modern development and appliances, or innate encouragement, except in the blood of their martyrs, who had died in Damascus for the race. I said how glad I was to welcome them; representatives of France, to a port now freed by Arab hands from its Turkish burden, and begged that they would make me party to their plans and intentions so that I could help them as far as lay in me. While saying this I saw their faces become parti coloured and their eyes confused. As I was not listening to their words (all compliments) but watching their faces for undercurrents of feeling, I determined to draw them a little further. I said that the common aim and purpose of the allies imposed on them mutual confidence, and unity of purpose and effort in the face of the enemy if ultimate victory was to be achieved. As they said 'Yes' only I said that the Arabs were doing their share in fighting the Turks in contact with them on the north and south and could do no more at the moment. Indeed, that we were much in need of help, in spite of the liberality of Great Britain, which had been to us a very fountain of benefits, and had given us all that it could spare, generously, trustingly, without establishing conditions or seeking for controls. Great Britain by trusting us had laid on us a debt of gratitude which can only be met by frank co-operation with her in future, and our acknowledgment that we owe to her all that we have and are.

However it was no disparagement to England to say that further assistance would be most welcome, and if on the same open terms, would lay us under the same obligations.

They said that I must remember that the firmness and strength of the present bonds between the allies did not blind them to the knowledge that these alliances were only temporary and that between England and France, England and Russia, lay such deep and rooted seeds of discord that no permanent friendship could be looked for. Further that no one of the allies could have any business of main importance in the hands of another. Fort his reason France had to have direct relations with everything in the world which concerned her interests, and they had come there that day to push France and her point of view.

I said that of course treaties were made and unmade and not in the west only – but that between Great Britain and the Arabs were unwritten bonds of mutual understanding which had probably as strong an influence as the innate sympathy of a civilised man for the success of a small and oppressed people. The permanent tie of state to state could only be community of ideas and sentiment, as any based on interest alone was [handwritten between the lines: must?] terminate. However I am no politician (my father will tell you all these things and more), but a soldier, entrusted by my father with the Command of his Northern Armies, and as such I could only assure them of my fixed intention to play fair to the allies who showed that they too subordinated political considerations to the vital and immediate need of defeating the Turks. If we weigh and balance now, because we look too far into future political difficulties of success, we will have our throats cut in the present. The Arabs are fighting for their life, and the liberty of their race, not for territorial ambitions. I then said that from the point of view of securing the direct profit of France – crushing Turkey – might I ask them again what military help they thought themselves able to afford us?

They detailed to me the guns and personnel they were supplying, and I thanked them as fully as I could. They next said they intended to land at Yenbo, with a view to their being associated particularly with the successes of our Northern forces, and for the same purpose they wished to attach to my staff two or three officers to be with me and assist me in the field.

On the first point I expressed the gratification I would feel personally at their going anywhere they wished: but I must remind them that though Yenbo lay in my district yet my father must be consulted, and I hoped that they would take the opinion of Colonel Wilson, whom we trust. On the second point I said that my operations took place in the interior, and they must have realised the unfortunate jealousy of the people at any sign of foreign activity: the point would have to be referred to my father. They interrupted that I had already had an English officer in my camp – and I said that I could not discuss details of my present staff with them. Would they please apply to Mecca direct?

I then wrote to my father that I did not require the assistance of a French contingent, and that the French wanted to make terms with the Arab movement, before they assisted it seriously. I suggested that if the price was high we leave the question of accepting the offer till we found it necessary.
G.E.L. [*sic*!]

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56. [*A meeting was held*][1] (12 January 1917)

After conversation with a messenger of Sherif Feisal who has just returned from Jauf, Lawrence reports as follows: "A meeting was held between the following early in December, at which it was agreed to break off all relations with Turkish Govt. at once: Nuri Shalan, Nawwaf Shalan, Fawaz Ibn Faiz of beni Sakr and Sinaitan. Until Feisal establishes himself at El Ula and can get supplies through to them they will do nothing active, as they are short of ammunition, wheat and barley. The letters written by them to Feisal are excellent, and as soon as there is a fair chance of success they are evidently ready to move. (Note: The time may not be far distant as it is the intention of Feisal to attack Wejh in a few days and thence move on El Ula). With help of Sherif, Nawwaf aims at eventual conquest of Hail for himself and overlordship for his family over combined Rualla Shammar blocks. He demands this in return for his assistance. Sherif has in mind the establishment of a Northern Arabian Emirate, as a step in his policy of consolidating the many conflicting tribes under a few heads, to check Ibn Saud and to control roads of Hamad-Nefudh. If the Sherif's revolt is to be successful it is of vital importance that the northern tribes sould come in with him, but trouble might be caused in the future with the Shammar and Ibn Saud by such aspirations as the above. It is only by chance that we have heard of these aspirations and as yet they are, of course hazy [deleted, "nebulous" written between the lines]. We desire however to keep in touch with your policy in relation to Ibn Saud and Saudes Subhan and to know your opinion as to the future of the Shammar and Hail after Ibn Rashid has been eliminated."

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[1] Unsigned manuscript, not by TEL (by Hogarth?) with the note 'From Arbur Cairo to Arbur Basra AB 588 12/1/17 desp. 8.40am'; at the bottom 'Paraphrased.' Record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/5.

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57. *Lawrence to Fitzmaurice*[1] (First part of January 1917)

Hussain ibn Ali

King of the Hejaz. Sherif of Mecca, and Emir of Mecca. About 63 years old, well educated, honest, simple, and yet shrewd.

Sons

Ali. Aged 36. Religious, weak, amiable, obstinate. Has been in command at Rabegh for five months, and has generally obstructive there.

Abdulla. Aged 34. Crafty, political, clever, affable, pro-English, intensely ambitious; very attractive personally. Captured Taif, and is now NE of Medina with 2500 men, intending to march across the Railway N of Medina to base himself in Wadi Ais.

Feisul. Aged 31. Clever, well-informed, pro-foreign: excitable, proud, ambitious; very pleasant in manner. Is the fighting man of the family. Fought for 6 months to near Yenbo, is now at Nakhl Mubarak, meaning to move up to Wejh about Jan 20.

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[1] Autograph, signed, undated. Harvard MS Eng 1252, (352) Houghton Library, Harvard University. A note by Fitzmaurice reads: 'Written by Lawrence to me for my information when I first sailed up meet him'.

Zeid. Aged 20. Cold, self-centred, silly, rather a funk, shy. His mother is Turk. Was responsible for the loss of the hill-country of Wadi Safra in December. Is now with Sherif Feisul being looked after.

Abd el Kader el Abdu. Sherif's agent and Governor of Yenbo. Partly Javanese. A good man of business, energetic, pro-English. Has never before hold an official appointment. Spent many years in Java. Native of Mecca. Got to Yenbo in August 1916.

Aziz el Masri. Colonel of the Turkish Army. Went through Turkish Staff College, hunted Kurds in Caucasus, Bulgars in Salonika, etc. Two campaigns in S. Arabia, 2nd in Command and Successor of Enver Pasha in Tripoli. Evacuated Tripoli on conclusion of peace, and was late courtmartialled by Enver. Fled to Egypt 1914. Is a Circassian-Arab in descent. Likes Wagner, speaks French. Good practical soldier. Attractive personality. Ambitious, hot-tempered, honest.

Ibrahim ibn Hammad el Rifada (a Billi Arab well disposed to the Sherif and with many relations N and S of Wejh) will be in Um Lejj from January 9 onwards, to embark on Espiegle if needed as an agent.

TEL

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58. *Lawrence to Fitzmaurice*[1] (Beginning of January 1917)

Sherifian Army

Composed of two sorts of troops

(a) tribesmen
(b) townsmen + villagers

(a) are Beduins. This means that they will neither obey orders, nor fight in the open, nor in mass; discipline is quite against their [erased here: moral] intentions, and they could never be made into an army. They are formidable in their own hilly country, as snipers. They shoot well to 300 or 500 yards, are incredibly active, and as hard as nails. Will only fight in their own tribal districts.

(b) are Meccans, Jiddans, Bishawa, Syrians, Mesopotamians, and slaves.

There are mostly good military materials. Only the Syrians and Mesopotamians are trained, and they are all deserters or prisoners from the Turkish army, either captured by the Sherif, or by the British, or by the Russians. Their officers are usually half baked, conceited, rather good-tempered fellows.

The less clever ones are pleasant.

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[1] Autograph signed, undated. Harvard MS Eng 1252, (352) Houghton Library, Harvard University. A note by Fitzmaurice reads: 'Written by Lawrence to me'.

The slaves and Hejaz townsmen are untrained, subject to panic, tough physically, intelligent,

Of (a) the Sherif has a varying number. Ali has about 3000. Feisul 2000 in Nakhl Mubarak, and 1000 near Wejh. Abdulla has 2000 N.E. of Medina.

Of (b) the Sherif has 1800 with Ali at Rabegh
2000 with Feisul near Nakhl Mubarak
1000 with Abdulla near Medina

Besides this there are detachments at Kunfida and Taif, and a training camp at Mecca.

Wejh: – Garrison of 400 Turkish infantry, under Uzbashi Suleiman Effendi, a Turk, and also 400 Ageyl (Arab) camel men, under Ahmed Bey (Military Commandant of Wejh) with subordinated Behir Effendi. There is one very old gun, which has been [erased here: at least] a generation at Wejh, and Ahmed Bey has one machine gun.

There is no permanent Turkish post S. of Wejh, though patrols are frequently in Wadi Mrija. North of Wejh there are often posts at Antar and Haramil, two stages on the Dhuba road.

At Dhuba are 250 Turks.

There are no posts between Dhuba and Moweileh. At Moweileh are 65 Turks, and between there and Khoreiba are Arab garrisons of tribesmen at Maarash, Ghal and Harr. At Khoreiba are 50 Turks.

There are no posts between Wejh and El Ula, and Wejh is usually fed from Dhuba, as the Dhuba-Moweileh-Tebuk roads are not "up".

Suleiman Rifada, with 35 tents, is in Wadi Mrija, about 6 miles from its mouth, at Himeira el Gibleija.

The Billi are probably about the same in number as the Juheina.

Their N. boundary runs from Naaman in Wadi Dama on the coast [writeen between the lines] above Wejh to Q. el Akhdar. Their S. Boundary is from El Ula down to Wadi Hamdh, and so to the coast.

The road from Moweileh to Tebuk is open because Sheikh Shadli Abu Tageiga (though a partisan of the Sherif) has not get ventured to declare himself.

The Welad Harb, (H. died lately) of Tebuk are apparently quiet pro-Turk, and most of the Beni Ateya follow their line.

Hamid ibn Rifada is apparently about 32. He is dark brown in colour, about 5' 5" high, with a scraggy black beard and whiskers and moustache, and a blank right eye. His chin is cleft, and his lips rather full (the upper lip short) with large teeth. Face thin, nose sharp and [erased here: prominent] high. He is poorly dressed, and not impressive, but is smiling, and fairly intelligent. Probably quite a good fellow, but not distinguished.

59. *Um Leji to Weij*[1] (6 February 1917)

Left Um Leji at 9am on Jan. 17th and reached Feisal's camp at Bir El Wahaidi at 10.30am. Found him busy paying and issuing rations to the forces. He has ordered 8 days rations to be carried and for lack of baggage camels the tents and heavy stuff will all be left here, and later sent down to Um Lejj for transport to Wejh by sea.

The Juheina seem very vague about our roads towards Wejh, but today's rain has given the idea that there may be rain pools on the way, and scouts have been sent forward to see.

Feisal told me that Wadi Agig, which rises between Lith and Taif, and flows through Taif, becomes Wadi Shaiba near the Harret el Meteir, and eventually flows between Ohod and Medina, as Wadi Agig, into the Hamdh.

Thursday Jan. 18th. Rode away from Bir el Wahaidi with the Ageyl at 1 p.m. Newcombe came up with Mohammad Ali el Beidawi about 1.15 and joined the party. Route lay over sand hills with scrub and an occasional palm tree in the depressions, and then out on to a sandy plain, in the midst of which lay the ragged grove of Um Ghowashia, in which there is no well of drinking water. Through the grove we went up over a harra now sanded over nearly to its topmost piles of stone; and at 2.15pm we came to a gap between two such piles and dropped down a steep sandy descent of about 50 feet to the S. bank of W. Somna into the palm groves of Semni, which run in a long line up the wadi. Most of the trees hug the foot of the E. and W. cliff down which the path runs – but the cliff, though it has a basalt core, is now only a sand bank of the maximum slope. We camped on the northern side of the valley, on the foot-hills. The Wadi is about 400 yards wide, and the palm groves are very fine and well kept enclosed by little hedges of dead thorn. There are a few reed and palm-rib houses amongst the trees, and wells of water, fairly sweet, about 4 feet below the surface, and said to be never failing. The wells are, however, too small to allow of the simultaneous watering of many animals.

Wadi Semna rises in El Jebelli. Feisal tonight wrote letters to about 25 chief men of the Billi, Howeitat, and Atouneh, to warn them of his arrival. Mohammad Ali el Beidawi made himself useful to Feisal in many ways, and took over much of the detail of the march. The scouts came in to report water at two places on the coast road and Feisal decided to go that way with the Ageyl, the Ashraf, the Gufa and the Rifaa, moving at intervals of half a day in echelon of sub-tribes, or according to the water possibilities. The rest of the army is to march by Khuff.

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[1] Typescript, signed, autograph dated (not by Lawrence) '6.2.17', record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/9. Only a fraction of this report was published in the *Arab Bulletin*, no. 44, 12 March 1917, with the title 'Notes'. It seems evident that, in the printed publication, the reports here in Nos 65, 66 and 67 preceded the daily journal which, compared to this typescript, have more the character of reflections following the march on Weij. Here I followed the original text. See *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XXIV.

Friday Jan. 19. It rained from about 9 till 12 noon, rather heavily from 11 till 18. We started at 1pm and rode down Wadi Semna, skirting the foothills of the coast by their Southern end. In half an hour we arrived at a flat of sand dunes, scrub covered, and wooded here and there with very large thorn trees. This belt seemed to fill up between the foothills and the sea, and we crossed it riding W.N.W. We reached the beach at 2pm and found a broad, hard, well-defined sand track, the Derb el Haj el Masri within 50 yards of the sea. We followed the coast till 3pm, when it turned away westward, at a little harra, half sand covered that projected from the hills. We went on the north and at 4pm reached Harrat Galib, running nearly N. and S. across our road of drinking water. Geleib lay on our left, near the beach: and Khuff on the right, in a valley behind a flat-topped limestone hill (J. Lahia) some miles away.

Feisal today said that the road up Wadi Yenbo to the railway at Bowat Station was very difficult for loaded camels. There is a road by Bowat village to Wadi Ais, and another from Kheif Hussein in W. Yenbo to Bir Fueis, by Ras el Magrah between J. Rudhwa and J. Tareif, and thence over a harra to El Ain, near Murabba in Wadi Ais. Murabba lies a long days journey from the Railway, and is said to be the last oasis in W. Ais. The water springs and plantations endure for a day's camel journey West of Murabba, and Wadi Ais itself for another day after that: to a pass high up between J. Tubi and J. Murtaba, a day from Wadi Goiss and Um Lej. These are many springs and wells of water, but the groves are poorer than those of W. Yenbo.

Raja ibn Khuluwi came in tonight to say that Abdulla reached Wadi Ais on the 17th after capturing Ashraf Bey between Abu el Naam and Kheibar. Ashraf was met quite by accident about 2 p.m. in easy country, and galloped down at once, before he could get off more than 60 or 70 rounds with his machine gun. The Arabs lost 4 killed and 4 wounded, and captured the whole of his party. He had with him letters to Ibn Rashid, Ibn Saud, and the Yemen, £20.000 presents of carpet and clothes, a machine gun with 5 spare barrels and 50.000 rounds, and a box of Mauser pistols etc.

Abdulla marched across the Railway between Jedaha and Kharaim without seeing any enemy patrols and left between the metals a letter to Fakhri with an account of his capture of Eshref. His force include Mtevi, Ateiba, Bagum, and Aneza, and he has got in a few Heteim mercenaries. The force left at Henakiyeh is about 300 strong; the desert seems in a very lively state and nothing gets through unplundered. Hejd caravans are making for Mecca rather than Medina, to avoid the danger zone. Abdulla sent to Feisul Eshref's gaudy Medina made dagger as a trophy (given subsequently by Feisul to Colonel Wilson) and there was great rejoicing in the army all night.

The A.H.Q. poet (also chaplain, and as Mueddhin, waker-up-in-general to the force) produced a creditable ode in 16 minutes; the ode summoned up the situation in favour of Abdulla, but said that Feisul's opportunities were coming.

On Saturday Jan. 20th we marched at 6 A.M. across the Harra, which was only a quarter of a mile wide, and nearly flat-topped. The beginning and ending of the harra was a little broken, but it would probably be passable to a car. The sand dunes of yesterday would not be possible for wheels, but the coast road probably avoids them, and if so, it would be easy to run down to Um Lej. We marched over ordinary Telama till 8.20 A.M. when we came to some rain pools, (the result of yesterday's rain) and stopped till 10.30, when we started off again (marching 340°) over dull flat country, till 1.45 P.M. when we stopped for the night in Wadi Dhulm, below J. Dhulm. The detachments behind us sent us word to say that they were held up, as we had exhausted the pools at Gelib.

On Sunday Jan. 21st we marched off at 5.50 A.M. and in less than an hour reached the ridge of a spur that runs down from J. Dhulm towards the sea, and looked over a broad level plain of black gravel, nearly bare between a low range of rounded bluffs running N. & S. a few miles inland, and the great main range of mountains, the Shefa, whose outliers are J. Heiran, just North of J. Dhulm, divided from it by a valley, consisting of a low ridge and a small side peak. J. Aslan, a group of three distinct and rugged peaks, two close together, the third further away S.E. and north of Aslam J. Raal, across Wadi Hamdh, and like a small edition of Rudhwa in its way. In the background between Heiran, and Dhulm the main hills run up in parallel rows of ridges of varying heights. We stopped at 9.25 A.M. till 11.55 and rode on then over the same featurless gravel flats, rising gradually now, till 2 A.M. when we reached a crest, over some basalt outcrop. From this crest we had an open view of J. Raal, standing up boldly the other side of a ten-mile-wide depression, which is the basin of Wadi Hamdh, as it issues here from the hills. We rode down over a gravel slope of the same character as the ascent; except that occasional tufts of scrub made their appearance, and at 3 p.m. we entered in Wadi Hamdh. It proved to be an immense bed of sandy hillocks a few feet high, cut up with shallow channels, which bore no signs of any general seyl, though evidently local showers fill one or other of them frequently. Channels and hillocks are alike overgrown with the thickest growth of Ethil and tarfa imaginable. It was difficult for us to force our camels through in places. The bed was in all about a mile wide, running from 100° E. to 300° W. and we cut across it obliquely till 3.30 P.M. when we passed a water-pool about 80 yards long, 15 yards wide, and two feet deep in a clay bottom, and two hundred yards further reached the bare flint ridge of the Billi bank of the Wadi, which extends as an empty plain to the abrupt foot of Raals, 4 or 5 miles away. The pool of water is within a few yards of the well of Alu Zereibat, and one or other of them affords water all the year round.

Tonight some Shefa Billi appeared to say that Sheikh Hamaad had raised all the Shefa and Moahib for the Sherif, in spite of appeals from the Juheini, Dakhil Allah el Kadhi, to remain neutral or pro-Turk. Sherif Nasir joined us, and Hamid ibn Rifada. Suluiman ibn Rifada is at Alu Ajaj, some hours north of us, still making up his mind (neither raw nor cooked as they say), the Wejh Ageyl have just left W. Miya, and therte is no news of the rest of our forces who were to have joined us here by the Khuff-Towala road.

Monday January 22. Murzuk came in at 11.30 A.M. We discussed plans with Feisul. He hopes to send Mohammed Ali el Beidawi up the coast [here erased: for] from Wejh towards Akaba, to send Nasir towards Tebuk, to go himself to El Ala, and to send the Musa Juheina to Abdulla in Wadi Ais. He asks for a mountain battery for Abdulla (who has only two mountain howitzers) and says that local opinion would make it impossible to allow a British officer to join Abdulla in W. Ais, though it will be permissible for me to go down the railway from El Ula, or up W. Hamdh to meet him there. Suleiman Rifada sent in to ask Feisul to leave him alone, which Feisul will do – as he most anxious that no Arab shall fire a shot against the Sherifian troops under any circumstances, since such an act would destroy the present claim of the Arab movement to unanimity.

Newcombe rode off at 7 P.M. with Mohammed Ali el Beidawi and Hamid Rifada to Habban.

Tuesday Jan. 23. Left Abu Zereibat at 8.20 A.M. and rode along Wadi Hamdh (the Billi bank) till 10.20 when we crossed a bed of the Wadi (running 280°) and at 10.50 we left the valley and rode up a side-wadi through foothills till 11.30 A.M. where we reached a hollow plain draining S. into the Hamdh.

We marched on the S. end of J. Tibgila, a small limestone ridge in front of us, and at 12 noon halted in a shallow valley at its foot. Wadi Hamdh lay only 3/4 of a mile S.W. of us. It is here one great thicket of brushwood, and is said to have rain-water pools in its midst. At 1.15 P.M. we marched again, and crossed the S. end of J. Tibgila. The height was only about 100 feet over the plain, but we could look over what was apparently an absolute blank area to Jebel Kerkma bearing 228° from us. Across the ridge we ran down a small scrub-grown valley (260°) till 2.30 when it rain into a larger one coming from 320° from the direction of Abu Ajaj. We then crossed a stony flat ridge to another wadi, with a 20 foot deep E. bank, and a gentle W. bank also coming from 320°. This was at 3.10 P.M. After it came another low bank till 3.40 p.m. when we crossed Seil el Ajaj, coming from 340°. The whole country N. of us was practically a plain for ten miles or more, cut up by these wide shallow wadis branching all over it like the fronds of a leaf. The hills bounding the flat area are low.

After Seil el Ajaj we crossed a tree covered flat of stones and sand (direction 240° to 260°) to Kseir in Wadi Hamdh at 4.30 P.M. At Kseir we expected to find water, but the clay bottoms were already dry, and we rode past Kurna (4.45 P.M.) where we stopped for the night. There was a well here, silted up at 10 feet, and dry, and there had been pools in the Wadi bed. Hamdh was here very wide, full of sand hills, not so thick with scrube as it had been at Abu Zereibat, but still bushy. The sea lay a little way ahead of us, and across the Bay we could see Habban.

Wednesday Jan. 24. We marched at noon along the coast towards Habban, which we reached in four hours slow marching from Kurna. The Hardinge landed enough water for the mules, and we heard that Ibn Shefic's infantry had been put ashore near Wejh and were in the town. Feisul therefore sent off patrols at once to investigate the Abu Ajaj and Wejh roads and got the army off before dawn to try to cut the Turkish line of retreat from Wejh.

Thursday Jan. 25. Left Habban at about 5 A.M. and collected the force in Wadi Miya. Thence advanced on Wejh keeping the various units in close touch. The M.I. went off on the right flank to Kalaat Zereib – and took there a few prisoners and some hundreds of Mauser rifles and ammunition.

The Ageyl advanced down a wadi running into Sherm Wejh from the South. Turks were reported still entrenched at the head of this, so the Ageyl dismounted, took off nearly all their clothes, and pushed forward by companies under Ibn Dakhil. They advanced very quietly, and at a lope, which meant six miles an hour on the flat: they opened out, to intervals of perhaps four or five yards, with even numbered companies in support, and made use of such cover as there was. The only odd thing was their speed, and their carrying their purple banners with them.

We got to Weij about 10.30 A.M. and found Saleh Ibn Shefia in possession.

Throughout the march Feisul was hampered by having too many troops with him for the nature of the country traversed. This involved their moving by relays over the roads and the wells, and consequent delegation of wider powers to tribal commanders than has usually been the case. The lack of camels made water carrying on any large scale impossible, and in the circumstances the arrangements made were perhaps the only ones praticable, but the carelessness, and actual incapacity of some of the insubordinate Sherifs gave Feisal much unnecessary worry, and made the carrying out of his programme to time impossible. Throughout the movement the body-guard was the only unit to arrive punctually at its destination, and Saad el Ghoneim with half the Merawin, and Sherif Jabar, did not appear at Wejh till January the 26th. Intercommunication between units was good, and Feisul could say where each force was and when it would arrive, but he was unable to impose his own time-table upon them; partly because they were haphazard, more because of the difficulties of water and forage, which made grazing, or a journey to water of some hours, imperative. Feisul was entirely alone during this trip. Sherif Sharaf, his most capable aid, was left of necessity in Yenbo as Commander in Chief, and Sheikh Yusuf el Khushairi, in whose hands were the administrative details, was left at Un Lejj to oversee the supply of food and arms to Sherif Abdulla. Feisul himself sometimes shows a large indifference to detail, sound enough while he has assistents, but dangerous when his tribal subordinates are dealing with affairs unaided.

His reasons for taking with him so large a force were moral not tactical, and justified themselves when Auda said at Alu Zereibat "It is not an army but a world which is moving on Wejh" or when Abd el Kerim el Beidawi, said at Semna, as he sat in the tent door and saw the whole plain about us sown with the camp fires of the scattered contingents.

"Yes, we are no longer Arabs, but a nation". He was half proud and half regretful, for the advance on Wejh of the Juheina was the biggest moral acheivement of the new Hejaz Government, since for the first time the entire manhood of a tribe, complete with its transport and food for a 200 mile march, he has left its own dira, and processed (without the hope of plunder or the stimulus of inter-tribal feud) into the territory of another tribe with a detached military aim.

Abd el Kerim is de facto leader of the Juheina, and felt proud of his tribe's new spirit – but also regretted it, for to him and to so many Arab leaders, the joys of life are a fast camel, superior weapons, and the short sharp ghazzu which the gradual realization of Feisul's aims are making less and less easy for those in reponsible places.

T.E.L.
6.2.17

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60. *The Arab Advance On Wejh*[1] (6 February 1917)

When the deadlock in the Medina-Hamra area declared itself in October 1916, the new idea of an attack on the Turkish rear at El-Ala, by way of Wejh, was brought forward. The situation in the south was that the Turks held Medina too strongly for direct attack by the Arab forces, and that Feisal held the Kheif-Milif hills too strongly for direct attack by the Turkish forces. In the rear, almost blockaded in Rabugh [*sic*], lay Sidi Ali profitlessly with his army.

Feisal decided to carry out the northern expedition to Wejh, and to do it himself. He, therefore, brought up Sidi Zeid to Wadi Safra, and transferred to him the whole of his Harb forces and his Southern Juheinah. He then withdrew to Wadi Yambo to organise a force of Northern Juheinah for the march on Wejh.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 41, 6 February 1917. See Chapter XXII of *Seven Pillars*.

While he was in Wadi Yambo in early December the unexpected happened. The Arabs under Sidi Zeid became slack and left a by-road near Khalis unguarded. A Turkish mounted infantry patrol pushed up along it into Wadi Safra near Kheif. The front line of Arabs, hearing news of this enemy six miles in their rear, broke with a rush to rescue their families and property in the threatened villages. Zeid's main body followed suit. Zeid himself fled at top pace to Yambo; and the astonished Turks occupied Hamra and Bir Said unopposed.

This situation made Feisal's march north impossible. He moved into Nakhl Mubarak with his forces and the still-trembling remnant of Zeid's army, and after a few excited days fought a long range action against a strong Turkish reconnaissance. In this he found his troops lacking in many respects: his centre and right wing held and repulsed the enemy; the left wing (Juheinah) retired suddenly behind his centre, without hostile pressure. He suspected treachery and ordered a general retreat on Yambo, the next water supply. The defaulting left wing refused to retire, put up an independent stubborn resistance against the Turks for another twenty-four hours, and then rejoined Feisal at Yambo. It explained that the retirement during the action was to find an opportunity for brewing a cup of coffee undisturbed.

The army of Sidi Ali at Rabugh was stirred into life by these events and began a sudden advance of its own towards Bir ibn Hassani, in spite of Feisal's appeals that it should wait till he was in a position to support it by a thrust from Yambo. Ali persisted in his movement, and Feisal eventually collected what men he could and hurried out to Nakhl Mubarak again. He was preparing a stroke against Kheif and Hamra to synchronise with Ali's arrival at Bir ibn Hassani when he got the news that Ali's forces had fallen back sixty miles on hearing a (false) report of the defection of the Subh. He, therefore, retired again, in a very bad temper, to Nakhl Mubarak.

The move on Wejh now appeared not merely the convincing means of securing a siege of Medina, but an urgent necessity if a Turkish advance on Mecca was to be prevented. Colonel Wilson came up to Yambo and pressed the point on Sherif Feisal, who agreed entirely, but pointed out that the Rabugh force had proved hollow, and that the Turks in Hamra were open to strike at Rabugh or Yambo as they pleased. Now that Zeid was discredited, and Ali shown a broken reed, he could not risk leaving the area himself. In the circumstances Colonel Wilson gave Feisal his personal assurance that the Rabugh garrison (with British naval help) would be capable of resisting any Turkish attack until Feisal had occupied Wejh. There was no means of giving force to this assurance, but it seemed a reasonable and necessary risk to take, since without it Feisal would not have moved north. Colonel Wilson strengthened his position a few days later, by sending Feisal direct orders from the Sherif of Mecca to proceed to Wejh at once.

The other Arab factor in our hands was Sherif Abdullah with an untarnished reputation and a force in being north-east of Medina, an area of very secondary military importance. It was pointed out to Feisal how effective Abdullah might be made if he was moved to Wadi Ais, a natural fortress about 100 kilometres above Medina on the railway line. He would there be astride the Medina lines of communication, and no Turkish advance towards Mecca, Yambo, or even Rabugh would be possible till he had been dislodged, and to dislodge him troops would have to be withdrawn from Ghayir and Hamra since the coincident Sinai push of the EEF made reinforcements from the north improbable. Feisal saw the point, and sent off Raja ibn Khuluwi at once to Abdullah with the scheme.

In view, however, of the situation at Rabugh, it seemed to Colonel Wilson that Feisal's move on Wejh should be undertaken as soon as possible. Preparations were, therefore, made for the start, before a reply had arrived from Abdullah. Feisal was very nervous during this period. The operation involved a flank march of about 200 miles parallel to the Turkish communications, by an inferior fighting force, leaving its base (Yambo) entirely undefended, and evacuating its only possible defensive position (Wadi Yambo) in the face of an enemy force of nearly divisional strength in Wadi Safra, not thirty miles away across easy country. The manoeuvre was only made possible at all by the absolute command of the sea and the ungrudging co-operation in transport of ammunition and supplies afforded Feisal by the SNO Red Sea Patrol. The situation at Yambo appeared likely to be so insecure that all possible rifles and ammunition were embarked from the town store-houses before we left.

Sherif Abdullah fortunately fell in with the Wadi Ais scheme, and said he would arrive there on 11 January. Feisal, therefore, fixed 20 January as a provisional date for his attack on Wejh. Actually, Abdullah was not able to reach Wadi Ais till 17 January, and Feisal did not reach Wejh till 25 January.

The occupation of Wejh is of importance, since it means a prolongation of the Arab front along the Hejaz railway by rather more than 200 miles, the accession to the Sherif's cause of the Billi, and later of the Beni Atiyah and Huweitat. Its direct military value is that it is the only possible base for operations against El-Ala, which is the vital point of railway communication between Syria and Medina, and a base for the future.

Sherif Abdullah's occupation of Wadi Ais rendered possible Feisal's move north to Wejh, and Abdullah's occupation was indirectly secured by the operations at Arish and Rafah.

T.E.L.

61. *The Sherifial Northern Army* [1] (6 February 1917)

Feisal moved away from Owais (sixteen miles north of Yambo), towards Wejh, with the following force:

Juheinah Tribal Volunteers

Contingent	*Mounted*	*Infantry*	*Officer Commanding*
Ashraf	270	296	Sherif Mohammed Ali Abu Sharrain
Gufa	690	854	Sherif Abd el-Kerim
Erwa	244	298	Sherifs Jabar el-Aiaishi, Jerabih ibn Rubaia, Maazi
Zueida	260	80	Ali Seyyid, Mifleh el-Hansha and Thali el-Urfi
Beni Ibrahim	916	800	Mohammed ibn Jebbara, Abd el-Rahman, AbuRageiba
Rifaa	261	836	Audah ibn Zuweid
Sinan	150	100	
	2,791	3,264	

Harb Tribesmen

Contingent	*Mounted*	*Infantry*	*Officer Commanding*
Wuld Mohammed	176	212	Salih el-Jeddahh

Other Units

Contingent	*Mounted*	*Infantry*	*Officer Commanding*
Ibn Shefia's battalion	95	400	Mohammed ibn Shefia
Ageyl and Ateibah bodyguard	800	400	Abdullah ibn Dakhil, Sherif Ahmed ibn Hadhaa
Mule Mounted Infantry	100		Mulud ibn Mukhlus
Mountain-battery	4	2.95 quick-firing guns	Rasim
Machine-guns	10	(=2½ companies)	Abdullah

Near Wejh Feisal was joined by:

Juheinah Tribesmen

Contingent	*Mounted*	*Infantry*	*Officer Commanding*
Marawin	800	500	Saad el-Ghaneim Mohammed el-Ghaneim
Hameida	400	308	Murzuk el-Tihaimi
Samarra			
Foweids			

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 41, 6 February 1917.

HMS Hardinge transported to Wejh:

Contingent	*Officer Commanding*
150 Bisha police	Sheikh Aamr
450 Juheinah infantry mainly belong to Ibn Shefia's unit	Salih ibn Shefia

This makes in the whole northern army, 5,162 mounted men, and 5,084 infantry (total 10,246 men), with four quick-firing guns and ten machine-guns.

The forces left in the Yambo area by Feisal comprised the following:

Anezah		
Wuld Suleiman	550	Sent to Wadi Ais
Juheinah		
Beni Kelb	250	At Bowat and at Wadi Safra
Harb (Beni Salim)		*Officer Commanding*
Subh	1,200	Abd el-Mayin ibn Aasai; Suleiman el-Teiah; Nassar ibn Wahis
Sumeidat	300	Assaf (Paramount of all Beni Salim)
Mahamid	600	Hetaihet
Hawazim	1,300	Selman; Jebr ibn Hemeid; Mastur ibn Aiyj
Dawahir	300	Ibn Balud
Seraha	400	Suleiman; Afnan
Beni Amr	500	Nasir ibn Derwish
Sakharna	800	Abu Bekr ibn Motlog; Naji ibn Rubia
Fedhallah	200	Feisal ibn Ahmed
Rahalah	900	Raba; Atiet Allah; Mohammed ibn Nafia
Dhikara	300	Mabruk
Radadah	600	Barakat
Hejela	550	Sheteiwi

In Yambo
500 Hudheil and a few Bishah.
In all, about 9,250 men.

Of the above force, since the Turkish occupation of Wadi Safrah, only about sixty per cent could be counted on as effective, and some large contingents were cut off from communications with Yambo. They were handed over to Sherif Sharaf, with orders to do what he could to get them together again. A few of the Hawazim and Sheikh Khallaf had surrendered to the Turks, but the remainder (about ninety-six per cent) withdrew into their hills with their rifles, and stood on the defensive waiting orders; or, if they were on the Turkish L. of C., carried out raids on camel convoys and local posts.
T.E.L.

62. *Feisal's Order of March*[1] (6 February 1917)

(i) Yambo to Um Lej

From Owais, Feisal moved to Akhdar (water), and thence to Nubt (water), and so to Um Lej. He took five days over the journey, which is one of only eighty miles, and experienced great difficulty for lack of water. I was not able, owing to difficulties of the local situation at Yambo, to travel this stretch with the army, and can give no details of the route.

The troops were given six days rations, and ordered to carry two gallons of water per man. The order of march was that the force was divided into nine sections, each under a Sherif or sheikh of importance, and instructed to march separately to Urn Lej, and concentrate there. Actually there proved to be no water at Um Lej, and so Feisal camped at Bir el-Waheidi, five miles north-east of the town. He reached there on 14 January, and in the next four days was gradually joined by his other contingents, who settled down at all available water holes in the district.

(ii) Um Lej to Wejh

The more serious part of the march was that from Um Lej to Wejh. The best road for camels is up the coast, to Wadi Dhulm, and then to Abu Zereibat for water. The drawback to the road is that the sixty miles between Semna and Abu Zereibat have no permanent water. For this reason an interior road, from Semna to Khuf, Towala and Abu Zereibat is usually chosen, as well-water exists at each station. Between Yambo and Wejh there is no single spring of running water, and the wells depend intimately on the rainfall, which for the last three years has been almost nil. In consequence, little water is anywhere obtainable, and the supply of forage presents serious difficulties. There is almost no grazing (and in any case a worked camel cannot subsist by grazing alone), and the price of dried hay has reached unprecedented prices. A particular local measure of hay, calculated to be sufficient for a riding camel for one day, now costs six shillings and eight pence. Feisal only pays £6 a month camel-hire, and in consequence, all the animals are underfed, and quite a number died along our march, simply from physical weakness. The Arabs care for them so far as possible, and there is little sickness among them; but their carrying capacity is impaired, and their number is also limited. For the transport of his army of 4,000 camel corps, and 4,000 infantry (the army is organised on a basis of rikab and redif to each camel), mountain-guns, machine-guns, and mule mounted infantry, Feisal had 380 baggage camels, in all. He carried eight days food, thirty-six hours water, 500 rounds of 2.95 ammunition and a small reserve of SAA, over the 100,000 rounds of the machine-gun companies, on these 380 camels.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 41, 6 February 1917.

It will be understood from the above, that the material needs of an Arab army (even when of the size and complexity of Feisal's), are much below that of a Turkish or European force. Feisal's mountain-battery, in the hands of its Egyptian personnel, required 360 camels for its proper transport. Since the Egyptians have been replaced by Arabs, the battery has moved with thirty-two camels for two-day marches, and on this expedition of fourteen days found less than eighty sufficient. The same quantity of ammunition was carried in both cases. At Bir el-Waheidi Feisal heard that casual rain-pools had formed at two places on the coast road, and decided to take that road to Abu Zereibat with his own guard and three other sections of the army. He ordered the rest to march by Khuff and Towala. The local Arabs (Musa Juheinah) on whom we had to rely for local information and as guides proved most unreliable. They were never able to say what the yield of any well really would be, or where and how far off the wells were. The numbers of Feisal's armies are much in excess of anything which tribal warfare has conceived, and the Juheinah – being uneducated – have no unit of time smaller than the day, or of distance longer than the span and shorter than the stage (from six to sixteen hours march, according to your wish and camel), and cannot realise a number larger than the digits. Inter-communication between units of the Arab forces is often hindered by there being no person in a force who can read and write. In the circumstances a great deal of delay, confusion, and actual danger for lack of water and food occurred on our march, which would have been obviated had time allowed of previous reconnaissance of the route. The animals were without food for two and a half days, and the army marched the last fifty miles on half a gallon of water per man and no food. This did not seem in any way to affect the spirits of the men, who trotted gaily into the Wejh singing songs and executing sham charges; nor did it affect in any way their speed or energy. Feisal said, however, that another thirty-six hours of the same conditions would have begun to tell on them.
T.E.L.

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63. *Nejd News*[1] (6 February 1917)

The following information about central Arabian matters, past and present, is based on notes of a conversation with Sherif Feisal.

"About five years ago Ibn Saud began to move the people of Western Nejd against the Meccans. He sent Seyyids and preachers among the former, and taught that the people of Mecca were kufar and quite intolerable in such Holy Places. He won over to his side (by various arguments) some of the Buqum and Sebai, and threatened Taif. This stirred up the Sherif of Mecca, who took effective counter-measures. In consequence Saad ibn Saud was sent down to arrange terms of peace. By mediation all Wadi Dawasir (to the point where it becomes Wadi Ranyah) was recognised to be Ibn Saud's, and Wadis Kharmah and Bishah and Ranyah were confirmed to the Sherif. Ibn Saud was recognised as overlord of all the Kahtan, and the Sherif as overlord of the Ateibah. The trouble about the Ateibah is that they are a Hejaz stock, recently moved into Nejd. Geographically they should be Ibn Saud's, but by origin and custom they are Sherifian. Two years ago Ibn Saud again got active, and sent agents among the Ateibah and other tribes. So Sherif Abdullah went out over the whole dira, further than ever before to the east, and received again the allegiance of the Ateibah."

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[1] Unanimously attributed to Lawrence and published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 41, 6 February 1917.

Feisal regards Ibn Saud as very powerful, but at home only; for his forces are not organised, and he cannot move abroad in great strength. I noticed, as before, among the Hejaz Arabs and their leaders strong distrust and dislike of Wahabi principles and sectaries.

Feisal is informed that 300 Turks with two mountain-guns, have been put under Ibn Rashid's orders in Hail. They are unpopular, and local disturbances in Hail recently ended in the deaths of two of them.

Persistent rumours are current amongst the Ageyl of a quarrel between Sheikh Jabir and Ibn Saud, in which Jabir was killed. The rumours originated apparently in Jebel Shammar.

The Senha section of the Qahtan are wild. A cord is knotted about the necks of young lads, and not removed till they have killed a man in battle.

64. [*Local situation*][1] (11 February 1917)

Local situation is not altogether satisfactory. We hear great rumours (via Abdullah) of Ali's successes at Mijz. Abdullah is sitting quietly in Wadi Ais, and watching loaded trains go northward. We have sent him a letter telling him to get a move on. It is really rather stupid of him to have made that very decent march to Wadi Ais, to be in a position to cut the railway and then leave it alone. Garland started today from Jeida (Gayadah) with a riding party to lay mines on the railway.

The Billi are lukewarm as ever. They have come in and been enrolled but are delaying to muster. Suleiman is still out and I expect him to stay out, though there are optimistic.

The Huweitat surapssed expectation, as Sheik Ahmed Abu Tageiga struck rapidly against Dhaba and Muweilah before ships or troops came, and is now pursuing their garrisons into the hills. This movement has quickened the Billi, but they want to be shown that we mean businness and Feisal is still waiting for camels and guns. The camels are at Jiddah and I hope will be brought up by sea, or they may get diverted at Rabegh. The guns I hardly dare hope for. I'm afraid, if the revolt succeeds, those mountain guns will somewhat conceal the stores and money we gave them. You so quickly resent benefits consumed.

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[1] Sent from Weij, typed and dated '11.2.1917', unsigned, record no. FO/882/6 HRG/17/10, preceded by the heading 'Report from T.E.L. dated Weij 11.2.1917'; 'Secret' stamp at the top centre.

Many Beni Atiyeh have come in, and yesterday arrived 400 northeners, Roalla, Wuld Ali, Shererat, Maasa and Kheibaris, a man from ibn Humman of Teima, some odd Amarat men from the Shimbol, near Palmyra, messengers from Nawaf, and Nuri Shaalan, and ibn Dughmi himself. I have not yet seen them myself.

Feisal has sent a party to Fahad ibn Haddal, and has got verbal messages from the Obeid. Asi and Khayum appear sick of helping the Turks, and Nejef offers its help again. The Hauran Druses have protested that they are pro-British, but willing to support him if promised certain local privileges and the defence of the Arab Government against Beduin raids. Feisal has notified all tribes that sale of camels or wood to the Turks is forbidden under heavy penalties and he hopes this command will be operative nearly to Damascus.

The Turkish concentration point is seen to be Medain Salih, and between there and Tebuk seems to be a regiment of mule mounted infantry. They have four other mobile units and patrol the line on trolleys; – the last of the Ageyl of Medina having come over, and the Ageyl who went up with Ahmed Rifili from Weij are on their way to join us. The infantry garrisons of the railway stations are being increased, from Medina as far as we can see and not from Syria; and owing to Abdulla's slackness they are plundering Medina and treating the population rather rudely.

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65. [*Weij Feb. 12 Asi ibn Atiyeh came in*][1] (After 18 February 1917)

Weij Feb. 12 Asi ibn Atiyeh came in to Feisul today. It seems there is bad policy between him and Selim, so that his coming is part due to jealousy. Feisul regards him as most important.

Khadli, Ahmed ibn Tageiga's cousin is also on his way. Asi brought a report that Nuri and Nawaf had gone on ghrazzu against the Shammar, and reached Hazim. They had taken camels, but on return were attcked, and Nawaf and Auda abu Tayi both killed. F[eisul] does not credit the report as yet.

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[1] Autograph manuscript, probably written in Weij and Rabegh, dated '12.2.1917'. Record no. FO/882/6 HRG/17/11. At the top right the handwritten inscription 'Capt. Seen KC's report' was added, which would indicate the report was sent to K. Cornwallis in Cairo. It is the first report in which there is talk of a possible capture of Akaba. See *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XXIX.

Abd el Aziz, is eldest son of Beidawi, Emir of Juheina. Second son is Abd el Meyid. Third is Mohammed ibn el Beidawi, who will be stone blind a year hence. Fourth son is Ghalib, and fifth is Abd el Kerim, whose mother was a slave therefore cannot become Emir.

On February 10th 400 Rualla and Sherarat, Mauza Beni Atiyeh, Wuld Ali e Ammarat came in to F[eisul]. Ibn Dughmi among them. The Kheibaris promises armed help.

Feb. 12 Garland went off, with Fahad el Hamsha, Saad Ghoneim, Abd el Kerim el Beidawi and Hamaad el Mangara and Selman his brother, for Jeyada, to tap the Railway between Haraim and El Ula, perhaps by Fagair. Wadi Hamdh has several mouths. Fahuman, brother of Suleiman Rifada, with his son and Sulaiman's, came to dinner. Rained last night.

Feb. 13. Letters came from the Amran, saying that they were ready to act against Akaba when asked, and the sooner the better. Rained last night, with thunder and lightning. Turks hold the Railway crossing-place block-house with garrisons of 20–30, of whom 8 go up line and 8 down line at sunrise each morning on hand trolleys to patrol. Sherif Nasir is a Shia. Feisul propones to send Shia agents to Kerbela and Nejef, and has sent people far and wide over the tribes of the Hamad. Turks have given people of Medina free choice to go to Mecca, or Yenbo or Syria, with transport by rail in latter case.

Asked Feisul about Turkey. He said that in view of the history of Abbasides and Ommayades he would be against ever admitting Turks to flare in Arab controlled areas: but he had no personal grudge against Turkey if it evacuated all Arabic-speaking districts. He says that if Arab revolt succeeds Turkey will bear no rancour against England or France or Russia, but only against Arabs, as they will make the Arabs solely responsible for their defeat, however little they actually achieve, since the Arab rift in the Turkish state has paralysed all her efforts. For that reason he regards an Arab Turk post-war rapprochement as most improbable from the Turkish side, and not practical politics.

He would be glad to see a Bogos buffer-state and hopes Turkey will be put in commission of the powers, and not of one power. He knows his Father in adverse to any negotiation with Turkish factions, whether Ittilaf or other, and cannot see himself how the most opposition Turks could really accept the Arab programme so far as to accept their friendship, since the Arab aim is the destruction of Turkish Empire.

The Ageyl mutinied on the night of Feb. 10 against Abdulla ibn Dakhil, who beat one of them. They fired in all directions and went for the Ateiba. Feisul went down barefoot in dark with sword, and laid about him, R.+L. Murgula came up on horse and helped part combatants and then Feisul's horse came and he mounted and charged down remaining groups. Two killed, many wounded. Objection to ibn Dahkil is his sternness and excessive discipline, and they say deduction from wages.[1]

Feb. 14. Hardinge came, and Sherif Shakir. Latter bought strong complaints from Sherif Abdulla of the lack of cooperation and news. Feisul has captured a letter from the Colonel in command of a "Circassian Volunteer Cavalry Rgt" who says to the O.C. Dhaba that he, with some mule M-I is at Khoreita on the Tebuk road, and wants to know how he is. This was before the Dhaba attack. Probably Amman Circassian. Orders have been sent to Mohammed Ali el Beidawi to do his best to drive them out. Selman el Mangara reported 5 aeroplanes arrived at El Ula from Medina. (El Ula means Medain Salih, where is Basri Pasha, with 300 Takarma and Ageyl and some infantry).

We heard today Ali and Zeid in Rabegh. Feisul rather angry, as he wanted pressure put on the Sultain Road. He wired and told them so. Feisul also said that the Juheina were gradually slipping home from Weih, as they hated being in a strange country. He intends shortly to send of all except the Merauri and half the Rifaa, whom he must keep, as the attitude of the Billi is not as enthusiastic as one could wish.

Suleiman is definitely pro-Turk and Feisal has given up all hope of his coming in. The Circassians at Khoreita have captured 150 Beni Atiyeh camels. Feisul says if the Turks can take and hold Buwat, Murabba, Kharan, Ras el Nejd and Khoreita, his access to the Railway is altogether prevented: – that is access in force, for there are other passes fit for raiding parties.

Feisal wants to send Sherif Hussein, Sherif Ali, Ahmed and Ali el Umari, and Ahmed Hajnj to Basra. There are five Persian speaking Shia Ashraf and Ulema, and he wants these to proceed from Basra either through Persia into Khamfein (for Bagdad) or to Nasiriyah for Nejef. He asks whether permission can be obtained for their landing at Basra.

Feb. 16. Feisal heard that the Howeitat has taken Khoreiba, and the Circassians had retired on Tebuk losing three horses. This finishes the Dhaba-Moweileh-Koreiba affair, in which the Turks lost about 50 killed and 50 prisoners at the hands of the Howeitat alone. Neither our land forces nor the ships arrived till a day later. Hamad Abu Shama, the Sherif of the Moahib brought in news that Jemal Pasha had been in El Ula about ten days ago. The Moahib seem keen and the Billi are improving. Abdulla ibn Muhama is holding Ras el Nejd for us. Garland seems to have gone to Fagair. Sherif Shakin told me that Abdullah's camp was a short day from Haraimil on the Railway, and that the posts at the sidings near him were of 30 men only, as of old. There are 150 at Abu el Naam.

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[1] The episode of the Ageyl mutiny is also reported in *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XXIX. On that occasion Lawrence wrote that ibn Dakhil had been removed from command.

Feisul has been spending the last few days bringing together the Sheiks of the different tribes under him, and making them swear to preserve peace between their men. If men of the same tribe fall out, the case is settled by their sheiks. If men of different tribes fall out it is referred to Feisul. If men of different tribes came to blows, both are to be arrested, and brought to Feisul for judgement. This is an effort to prevent blood feuds being exercised within the army. Our present move into Billi, Beni Atiyeh, Howeitat and Mohaib country makes the situation much more complicated. The Wuld Ali great men came in today. They have sent their women and children East into the desert, as a preparatory measure to opening a campaign against the Railway line. Feisul has determined to send Abdulla ibn Dahkil to Devi el Zor to see Hachim ibn Meheid.

Ibn Areidh is a Harith Sherif of Modhig, of the Ateiba tribal sherifs. He is a near relation of Sherif Ahmed el Hadhaa, and of Abdulla ibn Thoroab. The Harith are not a large clan, but have been robbers for generations, and so capable men of action. Fahad, another of Ali's generals is a cousin of Sherif Shakir, and an Abadla. Feisul says that Sherifs change their clan name every fifth generation. Thus his clan (the Dhuwi Mohammed) will now cease, and he and his brothers will form the Dhuwi Hussein. He thinks there are about 3000 inscribed Sherifs in all, though many more claim the title.

The Abadla are about 600 strong. Some of them live at Sabid, others in the Ryal el Ma, others in Sebai, Ramya and Bisha, others at Taif and Mecca. About half are Beduin, in tents, camel breeders, and the rest townsmen like himself. Sherif Nasir said the other day that Shias were more acceptable to the Sherifs of Mecca than the Sunni: because they always preserved their reverence for the family of the Prophet, whereas the Sunnis continually ran away on squalid evangelical heresies of the Wahabi, Idrisi or Rifai type.

Feisul says that Rashid ibn Lailah is a very dangerous pro-Turk intriguer. He would have won over ibn Rashid to the Sherif but for him. He recommends great caution in dealing with Saoud ibn Subhan, for we have just heard that Ibn Rashid has moved from Hail towards Basra, and he does not like all three of them being in the same district. He showed great pleasure at the news of Ibn Saoud's move into Kasim.

Another man has come in from Tebuk with the same account of the deaths of Auda and Nawaf.

An Ageyly in the Nakhl Mubarak fight on the Turkish side says that 35 men were killed by the shrapnel of the Arabs' 15 pounders. There were about 40 wounded also. There losses were almost confined to the Turkish infantry. The rifle-fire of the Arab infantry also inflicted many caualties. He says that the troops in Medina 25 days ago were very short of flour, so that the bread ration was only about 3/5 the regulation. The townspeople were in actual want. Their man was one of the party who cut up the yeomanry at Bir el Abd and Dueinar, and left Sinai only in September last.

It rained a little this morning – and was very cold last night.

Infantry private from Ladikya captured (wounded) at Tefiha, N.W. of El Ula. Was sent to training centre at Baalbek, where are four depot companies. Stayed there for a long time, and was then sent with two companies to Aleppo, where they were quartered in a mosque. About the beginning of January two battalions of the 163rd Regt. from Constantinople arrived in Aleppo. They were a little under strength, so a few Arabs from the two Baalbek companies were drafted into them. Otherwise they were solid Turk, had never seen service, but were new from Constantinople. Supposed to be 30th Division. The battalions were 1 and 3. Four and two are said to be on their way. Arab troops are not allowed to be sent. Companies were 250 strong, but are now only 200. They have lost many men by disease and desertion. Bad rations the cause of this. The old regulation of 100 dirhims of bread has been cut down to 63 dirhims a day. They get no meat, and the mixture of lentils and burghul is only 1/4 the proper quantity. The days they get olives they get no burghul. Prisoners belonged to 3rd battalion. They went from Aleppo (where he was not allowed to go about and consequently saw no troops) by rail to Reyak. Each station had a guard of 20–30 Arab soldiers. At Reyak were 800 workmen (including his brother, who told him there was an Arab battalion at Zahleh and a small garrison of Arab troops only in Lebanon). From Reyak they marched to Damascus, for lack of rolling stocks and the poor fuel. In Damascus was an Arab Battalion in Kadem and another in the town, also some mounted troops. Bread was 5 metalliks a loaf (instead of one metallik) and the people very miserable. He only stayed five days, and then they were sent down to Medain Salih. They found every station on the Hejaz railway had two or three tents of troops – say 15 to 30 men each station – and at Amman was a battalion, and Maan a battalion, and at Tebuh about 400 men, all Arabs. He saw no mounted units or patrols on the railway. In Medain Salih were only some Seyyan Gendarms, under Bimbashi Selim Bey: this was the H.Q. of the Ula-Dhaba-Moweid-Khoreiba Gendarmerie battalion. There is one hangar at Medain Salih, empty. From Medain Salih they came on to El Ula, where there were only a few gendarms and were at once marched out three days into the hills and so met the remains of the Wejh garrison straggling in.[1]

A handful of Ageyl, with Ahmed Rafik and 20 to 30 stripped and exhausted infantry. The others had been cut up on the road. With the battalion were 2 machine guns, 70 camels and 70 Arabs, carrying ammunition and food. On the 3rd night he was camel guard, with 14 or 15 companions. They were camped about a mile from the infantry. The Beduins suddendly turned on them, shot the Turks, wounded him, but then spared him as he was Arab, plundered food and ammunitions and drove off the camels as spoil. He does not know what the battalion said or did, but they were not far from the Railway, so probably got back all right. The Arabs were Billi, supplied by Suleiman Rifada.

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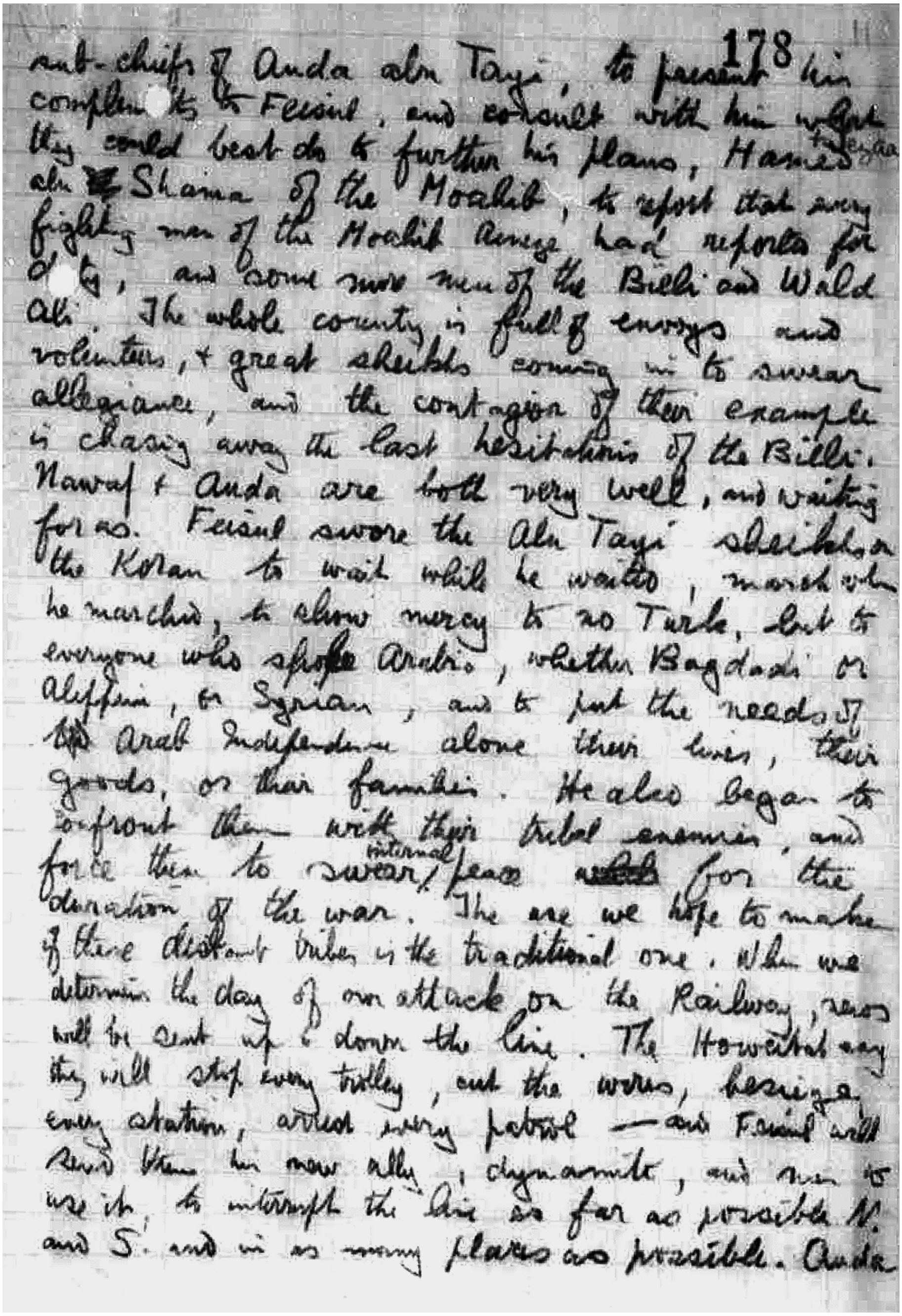
[1] On 24 January 1917, British naval forces had bombarded the Turks in Weij, forcing them to flee, and captured the port city. See also the following paragraph.

A train was to go to El Ula every evening from Medina, arriving between 8 P.M. and dawn. It carried civilians, women, children and soldiers sick or on leave. A train used to go S. every day, too. Much of it would be empty: he saw no troops going S. or N. Train were short: two or three full waggon supplies, and some 8 to 10 empty box-waggons for transport of civilians.

There came in to Feisul on 17 Feb. five chief men of the Sherarat, with a present of ostrich eggs, the nephew of Ibn Jazi with his felicitations on the capture of Wejh, a cousin of Nawaf, with a horse as a gift from him to Feisul, Ahmed abu Tageiga, awith the respectful homage of the Western Howeitat, the cousin and ten principal sub-chiefs of Auda abu Tayi, to present him compliments to Feisul, and consult with him what they could best do to further his plans, Hamed and Jezaa abu Shama of the Moahib, to report that every fighting man of the Mohaib Ainiya had reported for duty, and some more men of the Billi and Wald Ali. The whole country is full of envoys and volunteers and great sheiks coming in to swear allegiance, and the contagion of their example is chasing away the last hesitations of the Billi.

Nawaf and Auda are both very well, and waiting for us. Feisul swore the Abu Tayi sheiks on the Koran to wait while he waits, march when he marched, to show mercy to no Turk, but to everyone who spoke Arabic, whether Bagdadi or Aleppine, or Syrian, and to put the needs of Arab Indipendence above their laws, their goods, or their families. He also began to confront them with their tribal enemies, and force them to swear internal peace for the duration of the war. The one we hope to make if these distant tribes is the traditional one. When we determine the day of our attack on the Railway, news will be sent up and down the line. The Howeitat say the will stop every trolley, cut the wires, besiege every station, arrest every patrol – and Feisul will send them his new ally: dynamite, and men to use it, to interrupt the line as far as possible N. and S. and in as many places as possible. Auda reports the Moaza still helping the Turks at Tebuk, but all their tribes have retired out of reach. Fawaz is in the Eastern Belga with his men. The Druses are still nominally friendly with the Turks, and have had to give them many hostages. The people who searched Khirbet el Ghazala were Nua peasants from West of the Railway.

Ibn Dahkil and Mahmud his broher [last four words crossed out] kissed hands on receiving his commission to sound the Shammar sheiks, ibn Rashid, Nejif and Devi el Zor areas. Feisul asks that Basra be informed of him, in case he finds it convenient to come in there.



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sub-chiefs of Auda abu Tayi, to present his compliments to Feisal, and consult with him what they could best do to further his plans, Hamed ibn Jezza abu Shama of the Moahib, to report that every fighting man of the Moahib Aneyza had reported for duty, and some more men of the Billi and Wald Ali. The whole country is full of envoys and volunteers, & great sheikhs coming in to swear allegiance, and the contagion of their example is chasing away the last hesitations of the Billi. Nawaf & Auda are both very well, and waiting for us. Feisal swore the Abu Tayi sheikhs on the Koran to wait while he waited, march when he marched, to show mercy to no Turk, but to everyone who spoke Arabic, whether Bagdadi or Aleppine, or Syrian, and to put the needs of ~~the~~ Arab Independence above their lives, their goods, or their families. He also began to confront them with their tribal enemies, and force them to swear internal peace ~~with~~ for the duration of the war. The use we hope to make of these distant tribes is the traditional one. When we determine the day of our attack on the Railway, news will be sent up & down the line. The Howeitat say they will stop every trolley, cut the wires, besiege every station, attack every patrol — and Feisal will send them his new ally, dynamite, and men to use it, to interrupt the line as far as possible N. and S. and in as many places as possible. Auda

Original handwritten page from T.E. Lawrence's report (No. 65).

Auda has asked to be allowed to undertake Maan, and Feisul will consent, as he regards action aganist Maan as morally useful. He does not thinks Auda can do much there. He asks for a young sapper officer to go up from Dhaba. I asked him to get [?] to postpone any action by the Northern Rualla, Kerak men, or Druses till the second phase of our campaign, the attack on the Railway, is over.

Feb. 18 Bremond with Jaussen turned up at 9 a.m. I went up to Feisul and told him they were coming. He sent down horses and they came up and presented him with the first of 6 automatic rifles. He was very pleased. Later he went on board and Bremond talked to him, and offered him a French officer for his Staff, and advised the bringing down of the armoured cars etc. Feisul told him he disapproved of the Akaba push, and painted the difficulties he had had with the Billi.

Feisul told me that the S. Juheina would go off with Shakir tonight. He is arranging to dismiss most of the camel men, for economy sake and because the war is a hill one round Wadi Ais.

Feisul told Bremond that he was sorry to have had to come to Weij – it was lack of artillery which drove him to broaden his front and lengthen his threat against the Railway. Had he had French guns to reply to the guns which the French had supplied to the Turks, he would have gone straight for Medina. As it was he had to use his mobility and his superior numbers – and there was really no saying where this protraction of his front would end![1]

About the Staff Officer Feisul said he had none with him, and the attitude of the tribes – and conditions of tribal warfare made scientific military knowledge unprofitable. He had with him two demolition officers, and one officer as advisor in matters of finance, supplies, and geography. Bremond therefore offered a demolition officer and tried to attach a Syrian doctor to Newcombe as part of his Staff. An "Interpreter" and three men have been landed to teach the Arabs the use of the new automatic rifle.

Mohail have about 600 fighing men. Beni Hassan of Medina 700 men.

A Medina man, 13 days out from Medina, came in to Wejh on 19. Feb. He said of the 16 battalions formerly dependant on Medina only 6 would remain. The others had gone north. Families of Government officials have been sent up to Syria, and many of the heavy guns. Fakhri Pasha is still there: Basri and Jemal the less in Medain Salih. Aeroplanes are still at Medina, but the aerodrome so closely guarded that no man knows how many there are. Sherif

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[1] Brémond, in his volume on the war in Hejaz, completely neglects this meeting which took place in Weij on HMS *Arethusa*, aboard which Lawrence then sailed to Cairo. On 5 March 1917, Colonel Wilson wrote to Clayton from Jeddah: 'Damn Bremond and his nasty ways. He creates more beastly situations for me than one would have thought possible' (Clayton papers, Durham Archive, 470/6/18).

Jaafar has been sent away to Syria, as suspect, and Haidar is losing influence even with the Turks. The blowing up of the barracks caused a tremendous panic. The railway engines are in bad conditions, for fitted and leaking tubes, and speed is reduced to 18 kilometers an hour.

Mohammed Ali el Beidawi sent in a rumour that Akaba has been evacuated by the Turks. Feisul will not occupy it officially in any case, since the news of the taking of Akaba might arouse indesirable excitement in Syria.

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66. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (28 February 1917)

General Clayton,

i - Sherif Feisul's present intention is to raise all the nomad tribe from the Howeitat at Jauf el Derwish North of Maan, to Medina. This involves combining the Auda Abu Tayi, Ibn Jazi and Abu Togeiga, Howeitat; Atiyeh; the Billi; the Moahib: the Fukara; the Aida; the Wuld Saleiman and the Juheina. He has written to all these tribes and most of them have come in to him.

ii - Other tribes have sent in, without being applied to. They include the Rualla, beni Sakhr, Sherarat, and some Kerak, Hauran and El Huasi (Yarmuk) Arabs. With the exception of the Sherarat and Rualla these peoples all own land, and are open to reprisals on the part of Turkish Government. Sherif Feisal has therefore decided not to use them. Letters have been sent begging them to remain quiet till called upon for service. They have been informed that the Arab Forces are concentrating on the desert sections of the railway, and that their help would be useless in the case.

iii- Feisul was also approached by Hebron and Nablus peoples, who saw in him as alternative to conquest by the British. He sent the same reply as to (ii) asking then to keep quiet. His own idea is that Arabs shoould not operate West of the River Jordan and the Dead Sea-Wadi Araba line.

T.E.L.

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67. *Lawrence to Fitzmaurice*[2] (5 March 1917)

Dear Captain Fitzmaurice

Splendid: I think the rapidity with which the thing has been got going is most wonderful.

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[1] Sent, probably from Cairo, autograph signed and dated '28.2.17', on letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo, Telegrams. Arbur Cairo. Telephone: Cairo 5595, 5615' record no. FO/882/6 HRG/17/14. At the bottom, Clayton's handwritten note 'This is important', is underlined twice.

[2] Autograph, signed and dated '5.3 [deleted here: 4].1917', MS Eng 1252, (352) Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The news from Sherif Abdulla today should go to Colonel Wilson if possible, and to Cairo. If you send it to S.N.O. and Naval C.in C. perhaps you could get them to repeat? If not I can cipher and wire tomorrow:

Abdulla has destroyed the permanent way by four demolition parties working from Medina to Jedaha. He has blown up the bridge at Abu Naam over Wadi Hamdh, and taken prisoner the 22 soldiers guarding it.

This news, following on Garland's feat, is most satisfactory
yours sincerely
TELawrence

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68. *Hejaz: The Present Situation*[1] (11 April 1917)

Military operations in Hejaz seem to be somewhat hanging fire; but this appearance is due partly to defects in our information. [. . .] We do know, however, that a considerable detachment from Abdullah's force in Wadi Ais, with which Capt. Lawrence is at present, has attacked Abul Nairn station, under the lead of Sherif Shakir. The latter reports that he destroyed the station and also a train of seven wagons, and that he killed forty Turks. Details will follow later. [. . .]

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69. *Lawrence to Wilson*[2] (11 April 1917)

Colonel Wilson,

I left Wedj on March 10th at 9 p.m. and arrived at Abu Markha in Wadi Ais at 9 a.m. on March 15, just as Said Abdulla was pitching camp after his march from Bir El Amri. He had on first arrival in Wadi Ais in January 1917 camped at Murabba, the last well but one and only about 7 hours march from the railway. In February he moved to Bir El Amri, about 5 hours further up the valley and now he is camped at Abu Markha, two or three hours further up still and consequently two days march for riding camels to the line.

My journey was a slow one as the guide led us through bye roads. I was glad personally to see this hill-country of the Hedjaz, and the sketch attached [missing] has several points of interest particularly as shewing the position of watershed between the Hamdh and the coast. My route notes are attached separately, as they are very long, and the road is an impossible one for guns, or wheels of any sort, or for heavily laden camels. It is called Derbgel Gera.

I had to stay in Abdulla's camp from March 15th to March 25th. On the way up I developed boils which made camel riding uncomfortable, and on top of them first a short attack of dysentery and then somewhat heavy malaria for about ten days. This combination pulled me down rather, so that I was unable either to walk or ride. I think however that even I had been fit I would have been unable to get Said Abdulla to take action much sooner than was actually the case.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 47, 11 April 1917.

[2] Typescript, signed and dated 'Wedj, 16/4/1917'. Record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/29 (pp. 250–7). See *Seven Pillars*, Chapter XXXVI and, for Sidi Raho, Chapter XXXIV. Only minimally published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 51, 23 May 1917 as 'In Sherif Abdullah's Camp'.

The conditions in his camp were, I thought, unsatisfactory. He had a force of about 3.000 men, mostly Ateiba. They seem to me very inferior as fighting men to the Harb and Juheina. They are of course altogether Bedouin and their Sheikhs are ignorant, lacking in influence and character, and apparently without any interest in the war.

Said Abdulla himself gave me rather the same impression. He declares that he is a Bedouin and an Ateiba (that is in imitation of Shakir his lieutenant, but the leading spirit of the camp). He passes the day in an E.P. tent, luxuriously carpeted and his table is very well supplied. Access to the camp is nearly limited to his intimates and he spends very little time with visiting Sheikhs or deputations. The business arrangements of supplies, equipment, money, accounts and secretarial work generally are in the hands of Sheikh Othman, a Yemeni scholar, much over-worked and without even a clerk to assist him. Said Abdulla exercises little or no supervision and Shakir, though he does a certain amount, hardly replaces him. Abdulla himself spends his time reading Arabic newspapers, in eating, and sleeping, and especially in jostling with one Mohamed Hassan, an old Yemeni from Taif, nominally Muedh Dhin in the camp, but whom Abdulla introduced to me as his Karageuz (punch). Abdulla and his friends spend much of the day and all the evening in playing practical jokes on Mohamed Hassan. These take the form usually of stabbing him with thorns, stoning him, or setting him on fire. The jests are sometimes elaborate: the day before I arrived Abdulla set a coffee pot on his head and pierced it three times with shots from his rifle at 20 yards. Mohamed Hassan was then given £30 reward for his patience. Sidi Abdulla is fond of rifle practice, and also of Arabic poetry. Reciters from the camp while away much of his time with songs and dances.

He takes great interest in the war in Europe and follows the operations on the Somme, and in general course of European politics most closely. I was surprised to find that he knew the family relationships of the Royal Houses of Europe and the names and characters of their ministers. He takes little interest in the war in the Hedjaz. He considers the Arab position as assured with Syria and Iraq irrevocably pledged to the Arabs by Great Britain's signed agreements, and for himself looks particularly to the Yemen. He regards this, rather than Syria, as the future basis of strength of the Arab movement, and intends, as soon as set free from the boredom of these Northern operations, to chase Muhieddin out of Ibha, Idrissi out of Arabia and compel the Imam to the position of a feudatory. This sounds a large operation, but Abdulla is convinced of its practicability, and has even worked out the details of his actions. He has great knowledge of Yemen politics (Yemen means everything south of Wadi Bishr) and I think that the possibility of his realising his project should be seriously considered. It would transform the Sherif's state from a loose hegemony of Bedouin tribes into a populous, wealthy and vigorous kingdom of villagers and townspeople. All past movements of importance in Arabia, from the expansion of Islam to the Wahabite heresy, have been the work of the settled peoples of Arabia, not of the tribes: – and the Sherif's country, under these conditions, would be capable of developing and sustaining some new idea that might have far reaching consequences.

For the actual work for which I have come to this camp, Sidi Abdulla's attitude was hardly favourable. His Ateiba knew nothing of the country in which they were, – and their Sheikhs are nonentities. He had only a handful of Juheina with him and, led away by Shakir's tastes, scarcely desired more. Of his five machine guns only two were effective for lack of armourers or spares: he had no artillery officers, and till Faisal stripped himself of two of his four 2.95 mountain guns in Abdulla's favour, no artillery except 2 small and very uncertain howitzers. His regular troops (70 Syrian deserters, the gunners, and machine gunners) lack nearly all equipment, and he had taken no steps to help them. His Ateiba were two months in arrear of pay, simply through laissir faire [*sic*], for the gold was present in the camp to pay them up in full. He understands very little about military operations, and the only officer in the camp, Sidi Raho, the Algerine Captain, is either unable, or unwilling to persuade him to move.

Since his arrival in Wadi Ais Sidi Abdulla had not ordered any attack on the railway. The destruction of the bridge over Wadi Hamdh near Abu el Naam was the work of Dakhilallah el Gadhi permitted certainly by Abdulla but not suggested or encouraged in any way by him.

Sherif Shakir and Dakilallah are the two outstanding personalities of Abdulla's camp, and thanks to their help I was able to influence him to take rather more interest, and feel rather more responsible in Hedjaz affairs than formerly. Shakir is a slim boyish figure, 27 years old, rich, a personal favourite of the Sherif of Mecca, and companion since boyhood of the four Emirs. His mother was a Circassian and he is very fair, but his face is all ruined by pock marks. He describes himself as a Bedouin and an Ateiba and imitates them so far as to wear the *brim* (a girdle of thin twisted thorns next the skin, supposed to confine the belly to reasonable limits) and to encourage insects in his hair, in accordance with the Ateiba belief that a deserted head shows an ungenerous mind. His hair is black, dressed in three thin tails each side of his face and glossy with constant applications of camel urine. His manner is very frank and open, rather imperious with a freakish humour constantly bubbling to the surface, and escaping suddenness of comment that shows no respect for anything alive except perhaps the Sherif himself. He exacts more attention than does Sidi Abdulla, who plays undignified parts all day with his companions. Shakir is the born aristocrat. He has no interest in books, never wearies his head with thinking, is devout, but ignorant of the Koran, never enters Mecca, and in war is the man at arms and not the general. He owns splendid horses and camels and is open to race anyone (and win) at any time. In spite of his flow as their secret messenger to the Abdin at the period of their intrigues with Abbas Hilmi, for whom (in common with Faisal and Abdulla) Shakir has the warmest personal affection, he dresses plainly but spotlessly, and (like Abdulla) spends public hours with tooth stick and tooth pick. The Ateiba worship him, and obey his orders rather that Abdulla's, implicitly, either tomorrow or next day. When I had explained to Shakir what ought to be done to the railway and that it would be amusing doing it, he immediately put pressure on Sidi Abdulla, and had his way instantly – but he is capable rather of a struggle of a single explosion than of sustained effort. Under congenial guidance with his personal popularity, he could achieve anything within the Hedjaz. I think he could displace the Sherifial familiy, but at present is much too much their friend to try. Certainly there is no other Sherif with half his influence or potentiality. Dakhilallah el Kadi is quite another type. He is about 45 years old, short and stout, squalid with a hard bitten weather beaten face and something of the manner and appearance of a toad. His broad wrinkled forehead and face, deep set eyes, without eyebrows sloping down at the outward corners and generally screwed up to mere slits, his broad low, hooked nose, sharpened at the point by an old wound, his long curly mouth thin lipped and generally tight shut, with his spare stringy grey chin beard and moustache, make up an appereance as striking as it is unilke the ordinary Arab. He has very small hands and feet, is active, powerful physically, rich, celebrated for his hospitality and for his four wives (one fixed and three floating, change monthly and each with a separate establishment in a separate camp). He wears few and filthy old clothes in virtue of his office. As hereditary lawman of the Juheina he is given courtesy precedents in the tribe. With the eastern Juheina his influence appears absolute, the Beidawi family limit themselves to writing suggestions of what the Emir or the Government wished done. He speak [*sic*] Turkish well and was in receipt of 56 pounds monthly, as Surra for the railway and was careful to cash his last month in advance before he left Medina to destroy the bridge at Abu el Naam. Is hard working, celebrated in Ghazzu and war, knows his country, clever as sin, impenetrable, authoritative, eloquent, a renowned poet, well informed, cool headed and a mine of information of Bedouin things and customs, but suspicious, and slow to give confidence. Talks freely (and generally indecently), but is head and shoulders above any Juheina I have met in general ability, with considerable sense of strategy and capable, not only of deciding on a course of action but of putting it through to a successful issue however long or difficult it may seem. Without the influence in camp and operation in the field of Dakhilallah I would have been unable to get anything arranged at all. He was particularly attentive to me because he is afraid of Faisal's anger at his former loyalty to the Turks. Dakhilallah came down with Fakhri to Nakl Mubarak in the beginning of December 1916 and was, I suspect, largely responsible for Faisal's discomfiture. He took my visit a golden opportunity to make interest for himself in Faisal's camp, and I have brought with me to Wedh his son Mohammed, and made peace between the family and Faisal.

As it impossible to arrange a proper routine of destruction of the railway at once with Sidi Abdulla, I began by some isolated efforts against various points. I give a rough list below, but cannot guarantee the dates since I got mixed up during my stay:

March 24th Bueir, 60 rails dynamited and telegraph cut.
“ 25th Abu el-Naam, 25 rails dynamited, water tower, 2 station buildings seriously damaged by shell fire, 7 box-waggons and wood store and tents destroyed by fire, telegraph cut, engine and bogie damaged.
“ 27th Istabl Antar, 15 rails dynamited and telegraph cut.
“ 29th Jedah 10 rails dynamited, telegraph cut, 5 Turks killed.
“ 31st Bueir 5 rails dynamited, telegrapgh cut.
April 3rd Hediah 11 rails dynamited, telegraph cut.
“ 5th Mudahrij 200 railway blown up, 4-arched bridge destroyed, telegraph cut
“ 6th “ Locomotive mined and put out of action temporarily.
“ 6th Bueir 22 rails cut, culvert blown up, telegraph cut.

The Turks lost about 36 killed and we took some 70 prisoners and deserters during the operations.

From April 7th a regular service of dynamiters was begun, from Ain Turaa, working against Mudahrij-Abu El Naam sections, and from Buier against Istabl Antar-Bowat section. Dynamiters have been ordered to blow up not more than 5 rails per night and do something every night. The result of the first three nights work was satisfactory but no later details have reached me.

I think a constant series of petty destruction of rails is the most efficient means of keeping the line out of order. Large demolitions are no more difficult to repair and the blowing up of culverts is waste of time and explosives.

Attack with mobile machine gun sections against Turkish patrols or working parties would be very effective. The Mudahrij-Bueir section of the line has entirely abandoned night patrol as a result of sustained sniping of the stations by night in the last two weeks.

Sidi Abdulla has promised to return to Murubba to mantain this service [last word added by hand] of small demolitions, and to make an artillery attack on Hedia, on the pattern of our Abu el Naam effort, in a few days time. I am doubtful whether he will keep either promise, unless urged on by some-one in his camp. He is too lazy and luxurious to inconvenience himself.

The Garland-Martini mines of which I took two with me, and laid both succesfully, seemed to me to present very great possibilities. They have had a most powerful moral effect on the drivers and on the Turks generally, who are terrified of them. They explode late and are not set off till the driving wheels pass over them. Explosion takes at least a second longer and the damage thus tends to be too far back. My second mine in which the trigger was laid mid-way between two charges 30 yds. apart was successful in derailing the engine. It would be pure luck if the engine was seriously damaged – it could only happen I think if the charge burst under an outside cylinder [mistyped cylincer] but if the charge is in contact with the rail a derailment should be certain, and the mine should always be supported by a machine gun hidden at an effective distance. I tried to arrange this in each case, but failed, largely owing to the inefficiency of Abdulla's machine gun sections.

The Turks search the line very carefully by daylight before a locomotive passes. A trolley came first, and then an infantry patrol of 11 men, of whom three were each side of the way, looking for tracks and fire on the way itself walking bent double, scanning the line for signs of disturbance. For this reason tracks should be made through (i.e. both E. and W. of the line as though by a party crossing over) and the burying of the charges and fuse should be done most carefully. The railway is well laid, balasting ample, and earth work and bridging solid. The rails are very light, and badly worn, and the sleepers (all steel) light in section and shallow. The heads of many bolts have been buried to prevent loosening of the nuts, which makes it impossible to undo them with any ordinary short wrench.

There were three telegraph lines, two copper, and one very thick galvanised.

I came back to Wedj on receipt of the pressing letter of Sidi Faisal (attached) [typewritten]. He was very annoyed with me for staying so long and is I think in a nervous and exhausted state. This will however right itself as soon as he leaves Wedj which will be shortly. The Sherif of Mecca wrote a furious letter to Sidi Abdulla, saying that Rao had reported that he was annoyed at the British capture of Baghdad, and the failure of the French to supply mountain guns. Neither statement is accurate. Abdulla was astonished but pleased by the speed of our success in Mesopotamia and takes little interest in artillery. I saw one letter mentioning both points from Si. Raho to Colonel Bremond. The remarks could have perhaps been interpreted with a little effort, in the manner in which they seem to have been represented to the Sherif, but in any case the charge was untrue.

Si. Raho is a capable, hardworking, pleasant fellow, very useful in detail to Sidi Abdulla, but does not interfere in strategy or politics. Sergeant Claude Proste, of the French Army, now with Sidi Abdulla, brought him a letter from Colonel Bremond, pointing out that the English were surrounding the new Arabic kingdom on all sides (quoting Aden, Baghdad and Gaza as instances) and hoping that Sidi Abdulla realized the situation. I asked him for his opinion on the point, and he spoke very strongly against Colonel Bremond, and Berchet, French interpreter at Jiddah. He said they were everlastingly trying to do some discord between the Sherif and the British, and that he was much afraid they might influence English opinion. He said that his father always believed Colonel Bremond's reports at first but cooled off a few days later and begged that you would have patience if at any time a momentary difficulty seemed to rise. His father, he said, was too honest himself to detect intrigue promptly.
(signed) T.E. Lawrence
Wedj, 16/4/1917

I hope in the making the above strictures on Sidi Abdulla's behaviour, I have not given the impression that there is anything between us: he treated me like a Prince, and we parted most excellent friends in spite of my having said some rather strong things about the tone of his camp. I had come straight from Faisal's headquarters where one lives in a continual atmosphere of effort and high thinking towards the better conduct of the war – and the contrast with this of Abdulla's pleasure-loving laughing entourage was too great to be pleasant. One must remember however, that Abdulla is the head and cause of the Hedjaz revolt and neither his sincerity nor his earnestness can be called in question. I do think however, that he is incapable as a military commander and unfit to be trusted alone, with important commissions of an active sort.

He did a great deal for me: paid up the Ateiba, took an interest in his guns and machine guns, sent out his dynamite parties and began to prepare for a general move towards the line.

As regards the situation at Medina, I think the great bulk of the troops and practically all stores, have been evacuated northward in small parties by rail. The programme for a route march of the main body to El Ula has (wisely I think for the Turks) been abandoned, and the fall of Medina is now merely a question of when the Arabs [last two words handwritten by another hand] like to put an end to the affair. They have little food – but as small a garrison that the question has less importance. No food is going in from the north, so that sooner or later starvation will ensue. Till it does the Arabs will probably not enter the town since the Emirs are all anxious to avoid warlike action against the place itself, for religious reason.
(sd) T.E.L.

[attached letter by Faisal to TEL, typed in a separate paper numbered "18a" (p. 259)]

Wedj, 5/6/35 (About the end of March)

My Dear affectionate friend, may God protect you.

I regret to hear you were not feeling well. May God show you nothing bad.

I am waiting for your coming because I want to see you very much because I have many things to tell you. The destruction of the railway is easy. Major Garland has arrived and we can send him for this purpose.

You are much needed here more than the destruction of the line because I am in a very great complication which I had never expected.

I beg God, in conclusion to cure you from all diseases.

Accept my sincere salaams for your own self.

Your affectionate friend,
(sd) Faisal

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70. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (24 April 1917)

Colonel Wilson

(1)

Abu Markha to Aba el Naam

From 15 March to 26 March I stayed in Sidi Abdullah's camp. On Monday, March 26th, we started off at 7.50 a.m. for the railway at Abu el Naam. With me were Sherif Fauzan (Hurith, Emir of El Modhig), Sherif Suleima (Abdilla), Sidi Raho (Algerian officer in French service), and Mohd El Kadhi (Juheinah). We were shortly joined by Mufaddlil, a Silga Anazeh Sheikh. Total force, about 30 men. We went away down Wadi Ais till 8.50 a.m., when we turned slightly to the left, after rounding the mouth of Wadi Tleih coming from the north-west. At 9.20 a.m. we crossed to the right bank of the Wadi, under a rock wall, and at 9.30 a.m. reached a corner and bore more to the right. This is El Marraha. At 10 a.m. we turned a little to the left, and came out of the narrows on to a broad plain, formed by the confluence of the wadis from right to left. Just in front of us was Bir el-Amri, about twenty feet deep; water slightly brackish, but abundant. The hills on the right, beyond the bend of the wadi, are high. At 10.40 a.m. we halted under a great sidr tree, and spent the mid-day there. Wadi Ais proved almost luxuriant with its thorn trees and grass. There was a cool east wind, and the valley was full of white butterflies and the scents of flowers.

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[1] Typescript with handwritten corrections, sent from Weij to Colonel Wilson, signed and dated 24 April 1917, record no. FO / 882/6 HRG/17/35 (pp. 337–44). Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 50, 13 May 1917, with the editorial title 'Raids on the Railway' and some variations. There is also a typed version of this report, much summarized and unsigned, by Colonel Wilson, addressed to Clayton, in the same record no. FO/882/6 HRG/17/35 (pp. 331–6). Lawrence's original typewritten report was sent, also by Wilson, to the Arab Bureau and, in copy, to Mark Sykes, on 29 April 1917. I followed Lawrence's original typescript here, pointing out occasional variations and handwritten corrections. See *Seven Pillars*, Chapters XXXIV and XXXV.

We mounted again at 3.40 p.m., and at 3.50 p.m. reached an old wall, which deflects the stream of the wadi to its left bank, and guards an earth terrace, about five feet high, on its south side, against floods. The wall is constructed of chosen unhewn blocks, about a foot square each, and tolerably coursed. It is about a mile and a half long, and fairly solid. Its present greatest height is about four feet, but it must go down some considerable depth below the wadi bed, to withstand the floods. In the terrace, about 400 yards wide, partitioned off by the wall, are remains of fields, house-foundations, and a large sunk water-basin, of correct masonry. At 4.10 p.m. we left Wadi Ais, which turned off northwards on our left towards Murabba. We went up a narrow valley into Jebel Serd. At 4.45 p.m. a valley came in on the right; at 5.5 p.m. we reached an easy watershed and crossed the heads of a valley [here erased: following] flowing north to Wadi Ais. At 5.15 p.m. we crossed a second watershed, also easy, and went down a small valley into W. Serum at 5.25 p.m. We camped here for the night, watering from Ghadir Seriam (Moeit Hefna), ten minutes away in the foothills east of us.

Tuesday, March 27.

Started at 5.35 a.m. and crossed El Mauggad to the north end of J. Serd, and went up and down its first spur by a very steep, sharp path (there is a much better road for guns, ten minutes south of our road, over J. Serd). This took us down into a deep wadi, which we crossed, and thence over a second wadi (Seil el-Howeiti) and a low divide, giving on a side valley, up which we wound to another steep saddle at 7.3 a.m., and a nasty descent into a long rough narrow valley leading down into Wadi Turaa, which enters Hamdh opposite the mouth of W. Tubja. We reached this W. Turaa at 7.45 a.m., and camped at 8.25 a.m. near Bir Fueir. W. Turaa is a plain, bearing north-west, full of trees, and grass, with a sandy surface, much cut up with seils. One of these had filled in the well this year, but water-pools exist in plenty in the hills, so that the many tents in the valley have no lack of water. Wadi Turaa is the best way down to Wadi Yambo, and Ras el-Fura (Kheif Husein) is about two days camel from here. The flat-topped straight-sided hills on the north bank of the valley are J. Urn Rutba. The valley is Urwa dira.

We started again at 4.20 p.m. and at 5.5 p.m. turned 60° up a valley. At 5.20 p.m. about 120° and at 5.30 p.m. 60° again, up the upper course of W. Turaa, a broad smooth road, for half-an-hour till we lost the way, and wandered about the foot-hills, like Virgil's crippled snake, till 6.40 p.m., just across the watershed of W. Turaa and W. Meseiz. Our guides were at fault in bringing us (to be near some tents) too far north from our first entry into the Turaa plain. The quickest and best road is straight across to Ain Turaa, and up the east branch of the wadi direct to the watershed.

Wednesday, March 28.
Arrived at neighbourhood of railway of Abu El Naim. [handwritten]

Rode at 5.5 a.m. past north end of J. Tareif and down W. Meseiz, which is a steep, loose ramp of shingle and stones, scored deeply by water, unfit for wheeled traffic, into the great plain of el-Jurf, across which W. Meseiz cuts its way east to join W. Gussed, flowing north from J. Agrad. At 6.15 a.m. we were well into el-Jurf, and going due east, with J. Antar, a castellated rock with a split head perched on a cone, most conspicuous about ten miles off to the south. J. Jeddah, a group of needles, lay about six miles off down W. Gussed down beyond Aba el-Hellu. We rode 90° till 7 a.m. and then 140° till 7.40 a.m., and camped under a tree in Wadi Gussed. It is very fertile in a wild way – indeed all the Jurf is. We were camped nearly at the south end of a tongue of hills, which walls off el-Jurf from the Hamdh valley. To the south el-Jurf opens into el-Magrah, up which the railway climbs to a watershed near J. Bueir, and one comes down to join the Hamdh at Abu el-Naam; and our own Wadi Guad, rising a little further west, in the foot-hills of Azard (where is water in thamila), runs down north to join the Hamdh near Jedahah, after giving the water hole of Abu el-Hella on its passage through the hills. J. Tareif, prolonged by Azrad, forms a blank wall of hill to Bowat. There is no way up it for camels into the valleys beyond, except a difficult pass just South of our camp.

In the afternoon we went up the Dhula of Abu el Naam, just behind the camp, and examined the railway and the station at 6,000 yards. It has two large basalt and cement two-storeyed buildings, a circular water-tower, and a small house to the west; and about the houses were many bell tents and shelter tents. The perimeter was heavily entrenched, but there were no guns visible, and we only saw about 300 men. A trolley went off north with only one man on it, to the bridge over W. Hamdh, which Dakhilallah had attacked. It was a large bridge, of about twenty arches of white stone, and next to it were some shelters, and on the top of a coal-black mound just north of the bridge, some dozen white tents, with Turkish officers lounging in chairs beside them. At 2 p.m. a train (locomotive reversed), came in from the south. It had four water cisterns (improvised iron tanks on trucks), and four box-wagons, and after watering, went off north. The station of Istabl Antar was clearly visible on the Ras el-Magrah, but Jedhah was behind hills. Returned to camp at sunset, after sending snipers to Istabl and Jedhah to stop night patrolling. The Turks had been very active lately by night, but we succeeded in confining them to stations by the simple means of firing shots in the air near the stations at night. They expected an attack, and therefore concentrated the men in the GHQ and stood to arms in the trenches all night.

Thursday, March 29.
Up at 5.20 a.m. Very cold, with a restless dawn wind blowing down el-Jurf, singing in the great trees round our camp. We spent most of the day admiring Abu el Naam from the hill-top. The garrison paraded, and we counted them as 390 infantry, and 25 goats. No camels or horses, except the two or three near the well, which we captured subsequently. A train came in from the north, and one from the south. That from the south went on and contained baggage and women. The northern trains stayed all day and the night in the station. At midday we heard from Sherif Shakur, who was coming up with the main body (we were only the reconnaissance), that he would arrive at sunset, and we wandered out across el-Jurf to the last foot-hills of Dhula Abu el Naim, till we found what seemed to be a good gun-position, about 2,000 yards west of the station. There were no Turkish outposts to be found, except that on the bridge. Behind the station is a steep hill, J. Unseih, about 400 yards distant, and we decided to put 400 men into it, to take the Turks in the rear.

The hills about us were typical of the eastern Hejaz hills.

They were of glistening, sunburnt stone, very metallic in ring when struck, and splitting red or green or brown as the case may be. The upper part of the hill is a cap, of an outcrop of base rock, and the lower screes are hard at the foot, where they are packed with a thin soil, but loose and sliding on the slopes. From them sprout occasional thorn bushes, and frequent grasses. The commonest grass sends up a dozen blades from one root, and grows hand- to knee-high, of yellow-green colours. At the head are empty ears, between many feathered arrows of silvery down. With these and a shorter grass, ankle deep, bearing a bottle-brush head of pearl-grey, the hillsides are furred white, and dance gaily in the wind. One cannot call it verdure, but it is excellent pasture, and in the valleys are great tufts of coarse grass, waist-high, bright green in colour till it fades to a burnt yellow, and growing thickly in all water-lined sand or shingle. Between these tufts are thorn trees from eight to forty feet in height, and less frequently sidr trees, giving thick shade, and dry sugary fruit. Add some brown tamarisk, broom, a great variety of coarse grass and flowers, and everything that has thorns, and you exhaust the usual vegetation of the Hejaz. Only on steep hillsides is there a little plant, hemeid, with fleshy green heart-shaped leaves and a spike of white or red blossom. Its leaves are pleasantly acid, and allay thirst.

Shakir arrived at 5 p.m., but brought only 300 men, two machine-guns, one mountain-gun, and one mountain howitzer. The lack of infantry made the scheme of taking the station in rear impossible, since it would have left the guns without support; so we changed ideas, and decided on an artillery action only. We sent down a dynamite party to the north of the station, to cut rails and telegraph at dawn. I started at 8 p.m. with a company of Ateibah and a machine-gun, to lay a mine and cut the wire between Abu el-Naam and Istabl Antar. Mohammed el-Gadhi guided us very well, and we reached the line at 11.15 p.m., in a place where there was cover for the machine-gun in a group of bushes and a sandy valley bed about four feet deep, 500 yards west of the rails. I laid a mine, and cut the wire, and at 1 a.m. started back for the main body with a few Ageyl, but did not get in till 5 a.m., through various accidents, and was not able to go forward to the artillery position till 6.30 a.m. I found the guns just ready, and we shelled the station till 10 a.m., when Shakir found that the Ateibah infantry had no water, and we retired to W. Gussed without molestation. Girbis [waterskins] are mostly unobtainable in the eastern Hejaz, which makes it difficult for an Arab force of more than a dozen men to remain in action for half a day.

The results of the bombardment were to throw the upper storeys of the large stone buildings into the ground-floors, which were reported to contain stores and water-cisterns. We could not demolish the ground-floors. The water-tank (metal) was pierced and knocked out of shape, and three shells exploded in the pumping room and brought down much of the wall. We demolished the well-house, over the well, burned the tents and the wood-pile and obtained a hit on the first wagon of the train in the station. This set it on fire, and the flames spread to the remaining six wagons, which must have contained inflammable stores, since they burned furiously. The locomotive was behind the northern building, and got steam up, and went off (reversed) towards Medina. When it passed over the mine it exploded it, under the front bogies (i.e. too late). It was, however, derailed, and I hoped to see the machine-gun come into action against it, but it turned out that the gunners had left their position to join us in our attack on the station, and so the seven men on the engine were able to 'jack' it on the line again in about half-an-hour (only the front wheels were derailed) and it went off towards Istabl Antar, at foot-pace, clanking horribly.

The north end of the station now surrendered, and about 200 of the garrison of the north end rushed in driblets for the hills (J. Unseila) and took cover there. I examined the prisoners (twenty-four in number, Syrians, of 130th Regt), and also the brake-van of the train. The box-body had been lined with matchboard, at an interval of about four inches, and packed near the floor with cement (loopholed) and above with shingle, but it was burning hotly, and the Turks were too close for me to obtain accurate details.

We fired altogether fifty rounds (shrapnel) from 2,200 and 900 yards and about ten belts of machine-gun ammunition. Deserters reported about thirty dead (I saw nine only) and forty-two wounded. We captured the pedigree mare of Ali Nasir (the Egyptian 'Bab-Arab' in Medina) and a couple of camels from the well-house, and destroyed many rails. Our casualties were one man wounded. Had there been enough Arab infantry to occupy J. Unseila, which commanded the trenches at 400 yards (plunging fire), I think we could have taken the entire garrison. The Ateibah were not asked to do very much, and I do not think would have done it if asked. The Juheinah and the gunners behaved very well, and I think that the attack – as an experiment – justified itself. It had the effect, in the next three days, of persuading the Turks to evacuate every outpost and blockhouse on the line, and concentrate the garrison in the various railway stations. This action facilitated the work of the dynamite parties.

Friday, March 30.

We marched back to el-Jurf, and camped in the middle of it from 12.30 p.m. till 3 p.m. We then rode up the Wadi Meseiz (gradually turning west and south) till the watershed at 5.15 p.m., and at 5.30 p.m. had crossed the divide into W. Turaa, and rode down it till 6.30 p.m., when we camped at Ain Turaa, just where the eastern Wadi Turaa enters the great plain of Bir Fueis. The march (like all Shakir's marches) was very fast. The water of the W. Ain is very good, and fairly plentiful.

Saturday, March 31.

Left el-Ain at 5.45 a.m.; rode across the plain, up the side of the wadi and over an easy pass (to the right) into Seil el-Howeita. From this we took the easy southern road into el-Muaggad, and stopped from 8.30 a.m. till 3.45 p.m. in Wadi Serum. We then marched to Bir el-Amri at 5.45 p.m. and camped there.

Sunday, 1 April.

Rode from Birl el-Amri to camp at Abu Markha from 6 a.m. to 8.30 a.m.
Abu Markha to Abu el-Naam: 14 hours, 20 minutes.
Abu el-Naam to Abu Markha: 13 hours, 15 minutes.

I think some notice should be taken of Sawish Abd El Rahim, of the 3rd E.A. Mountain Battery. He is in command of the two 2-95 mountain guns with Sidi Abdulla, without any artillery Officer (or Officer of any sort) to help him, and with a very motley crew behind him. The guns are however clean, the animals well kept, and the gunners behaved well in camp and in action. It is difficult for an Egyptian to have to act 120 miles from the coast and in the midst of the Hejaz Arabs not fond of his race; but Abd El Rahin seemed on good terms with his men, and with Sherif Abdulla. he has all the responsibility of providing stores, ammunition and spares for his half battery, and does it well. In action he was most anxious that all the regulations of the Text-Book should be punctiliously observed and kept his head under fire.

T.E.L.

71. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (24 April 1917)

Colonel Wilson

(2)

Wejh to Wadi Ais; via Darb el Gara

I left Wejh at 9 p.m. on 10 March, with four Ageyl and four Rifaa Juheinah, for Sidi Abdulla. We went out along the Khanthila road as far as J. Jidra (El Nebadein, but the northern hill of the two), at 12.30 p.m. We then bore off right from the Khanthila road, across a sanded area of rough stones. This lasted only till 12.50., when we entered a wadi, crossed it, and passed over others and their tributaries till 1.15 a.m., when we stopped in Seil Arja, which runs down to Munaibara. The going for the last hour was rough.

March 11.

Started at 6 a.m. up a tributary of Seil Arja, and ESE till 6.30 a.m., when we reached head of valley and entered a plain, about a mile wide, which is Wadi [space left empty]. At 6.45 a.m. the road forked and we went right, downhill, at 140°, into Seil Mismah at 7.10. Mismah runs into Arja and Munaibura. We crossed it and rode up a side-valley (rough in parts) to a watershed at 7.40 a.m., and a steep descent of a few minutes into a great sand and gravel plain across which we went at 110° till 8.15 a.m., when we crossed Wadi el-Murra, which runs into the Sebakha at Kurna, J. Murra, about 3 miles away to the north. At 10.10 a.m. we reached Wadi Abu Ajaj, running from 20° to 200°; it is not one bed, but a whole system of seils, all shallow and bushy, with soft sandy water-courses winding about them. About 3 miles away on the right lay J. Ajwi, overlooking Mersa Zaam. Ajwi is a very unmistakable square-sided flat-topped coral reef. We stopped at 10.45 a.m. in Wadi Abu Ajaj and started again at 12.45 p.m. At 1.30 p.m. was abreast of J. Tibgila, about five miles off, and at 1.50 p.m. and 2.5 p.m. crossed the branches of Wadi Ghorban, which passes just south of Tibgila. The going across the plain was at first soft, and later rather more solid, but with very soft sandy valleys, which would be bad for cars. The guide now took us too far east, into Wadi [space left empty] and the path entered the lower spurs of J. Raad, so that we did not enter the Hamdh valley till 4 p.m. We bore across this to the Ghadir at Abu Zereibat, which we reached at 6 p.m. It was little, if any, smaller than it had been in January last.

March 12.

Started at 3.45 a.m. and proceeded to lose the road in the dark. At 4.30 a.m. we entered low rough hills, J. Agumma, till 5.20 a.m., when we turned to the right up Seil Aguna at 135°. At 5.30 a.m. reached the watershed, which was easy, and rode down a short valley on luxuriant colocynth into El Khubt, at 6.10 a.m. Colocynth makes the best tinder when crushed and dried. Its juice is rubbed on the feet to produce a purgative effect, which is said to be quite distinct, even when the drug is applied in this very diluted manner. Horses which will eat its stalks and leaves can go without water for a considerable time.

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[1] The typescript, previously mentioned record no. FO/882/6 HRG/17/35, is part of the preceding block (pp. 341–4). It is in fact numbered '(2)' and is evidently written at the same time and on the same typewriter. Published with some variations in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 51, 23 May 1917, with the editorial title 'Wejh to Wadi Ais and back'. Here I followed the original typescript. See *Seven Pillars* Chapter XXXI.

El Khubt is a great plain, draining at its extremity into Wadi Hamdh near Abu Zereibat. A road goes up it to Um Lejj. We crossed it diagonally, aiming for El Sukhur (wrongly called J. Arban on the map). At 7.15 a.m. we reached the E. bank of El Khubt, and turned right, up a side valley for 10 minutes, on to the plain (Magrah) of El Darraj, a scrub covered area leading right up to the feet of El Sukhur. We halted at 7.40 a.m., in the middle of a rain shower, which lasted intermittently from 6 till 8.30 a.m. In El Darraj were some half-dozen tents of Waish Billi, with sheep, goats, horses and camels. There has been no rain to speak of in the Bluwiya this year, and plenty in the Juheiniya, and, therefore, so many of the Billi have come over the border peaceably to pasture. These tents were watering from Heiran.

We left El Darraj halt at 10 a.m. and moved across to the feet of the Sukhur. We wound up a valley till we were between them and the isolated Sakhara S.W. of them, and then scrambled for 15 minutes up rock shelves and along faults over a knife ridge and down a stony bed, past a huge boulder all hammered over with tribal marks, into the basin of W. Heiran. The Sukhur are huge striated masses of a reddish coloured volcanic rock, grey on the surface; the Sakhara is like a brown watermelon standing on end: on its south and east faces it is absolutely smooth, and dome-headed, polished till it shines, with fine cracks running up and across it, like seams. The height above the plain must be about 700 feet.

At 11.5 a.m. we were over this pass and in a narrow valley, between granite outcrops. This led into another valley, and so to another, till we entered Wadi Herian (40° to 200°, its course) at noon. The well lay some way on our right, down the valley. We crossed the valley, rode up a tributary, and then till 12.45 p.m. went up and down over granite shards piled up in tiny 50-foot mounds all round us in wild confusion. There was no road and we kept no direction, but wandered where we could. Wadis ran in and out everywhere.

At 12.45 p.m. we descended sharply into Seil Dhrufi, a wooded valley 100 yards wide, along which we went at 120°. At 1.30 p.m. we got to the head of our branch of the valley, and ascended a narrow and difficult hill-path, with broken steps of rock, difficult for camels, round a shoulder of Jebel Dhrufi (it is a range) to a saddle from which a steep but short descent led into and across a valley sweeping down from N.E. towards the sea. The ground again became a confusion of small mounds and valleys till a new watershed was reached at 1.40 p.m. This was easy and led us to a big valley running south; we bent on the left at right angles close by the rock-wall down which we had come. We turned up this gorge, which grew very narrow, and the path soon left the bed and began to climb the side of the hill to the north. The ascent was very steep, unfit for laden camels, owing to the rough surface and the narrowness of the path, between very sharp slopes above and below. At 2.20 p.m. we reached the watershed and descended a sandy valley into W. Hanbal, a large well-wooded tributary of W. Heiran. We stopped for twenty minutes to gather for the camels the luxuriant grass in a little sandy bay of the hills and then crossed the wadi and marched up a tributary of its east bank, W. Kitan. This is a stony valley with a good hard surface (no rocks), about 300 yards wide from hill to hill, and well wooded with thorn trees. We marched up till 4.15 p.m. and then halted; the valley had drawn in a little in the last half-hour. The hills on the south were small; but to the north is a very large hill, J. Jidwa, about 6 miles long and perhaps 3 miles distant, flanking the valley with a steep and high hog's back, running nearly north and south.

March 13.

Started at 3.30 a.m. and reached the head of W. Kitan in a few minutes and went over a narrow pass between rock masses (steep but not difficult; too narrow for wheels) into Seil Jidha, which runs into W. Amk. It has sharp hills each side. At 4.30 we diverged to the right up a gorge running south. This was from 8 to 10 feet wide between its cliffs, but the bed of the torrent was all encumbered with fallen stones and trees, so that the passage was difficult. At 4.50 we reached its head and found a gentle valley running away south. At 4.50, when the wadi turned west about a mile above Bir Reimi, which is the only thamila in the Wadi bed. The water smelt one foul smell, and tasted equally unpleasantly, but quite differently. We had high hills on the east and smaller hills to the west. We started again at 8.30 a.m., leaving Wadi Reimi by a side wadi to the south, which ascended to a gentle watershed, from which we had a fine view down the broad and green Wadi Amk, which passes through Khuff to the sea. This branch of it runs 150° and is bounded by considerable hills. At 9.10 the valley turned more to the east, and at 9.20 received a large feeder (on the main stream) from the north, and bore off 180°. We cut across the confluence, at 70°, making for the centre of a great hill in front of us. At 9.30 a.m. we found a side-valley and at 9.40 went over a patch of soft white sand in its bed. At 10.15 we entered Wadi Dhuhub el Amk, coming from the north to join W. Amk. We went up a side valley from it, with high hills on the right about a quarter of a mile off, and then climbed a sandy valley between piles of the curiously warped grey granite, looking like cold toffee, that one finds frequently in the Hejaz. This valley led us to the foot of one of these great stone piles, up which runs a natural ramp and staircase, badly broken, twisting and difficult for camels, but short. This brought us at

10.30 a.m. back into W. Dhuhub again, above its northern bend. We followed the valley till 11.38, its head. It runs about 120°, and has low hills on the right, and high hills on the left of the road, and is full of quite large trees; there are water pools in the gorges about it. There were a number of Merawin tents here and there, with plentiful sheep and goats. At 11.15 the valley narrowed and began (from being excellent smooth shingle) to get stony. At 11.25 it became a mere ravine, on the north bank of which an execrable track led us up to the watershed between W. Dhuhub el Amk and W. Marrakh. The view from the crest was beautiful, but the descent dangerous. We reached the foot at 11.45, and found ourselves in an absolutely straight valley, running steeply downhill at 130° towards a depression ahead, between two regular walls of moderate hills. At 12.25 p.m. a large side-valley entered on the right, showing, through its break in the hills, a parallel range a couple of miles away and broken ground behind. There was a corresponding (but small) break on the left. The hill walls then opened out in a double sweep like an amphitheatre of grey stone with veins of dark red brown granite running over them in up-and-down lines, looking like cockscombs, or a rustic scenic railway; and in front came down a steep black wall of harrah, with a low hill of brown granite in the middle of the line. We halted at 1.10 p.m. under the trees, shortly after passing a pile circle of uncut stones about 40 feet in diameter, with a central cairn, and some small square piles round about it, outside the circle. This was the first stone remains I had noted (bar simple cairns) on the way from Wejh, but from now onwards to the mouth of Wadi Ais they were to grow increasingly frequent. In parts of the harrah and its valleys are distinct remains of old villages and rough terrace constructions for cultivation. The Juheinah ascribe all these to the Beni Hillal, and never put up even a cairn of more than three or four stones themselves. Their only stone constructions are little square box-houses of the type they call "nawamis" in parts of Sinai. These little places are made to shelter the young lambs and kids, and are put up, as needed, by the shepherd boys.

We have now got into a much more fertile area than the Tihamah or the hills near Wejh. My camel men got milk today in the Merawi tents – the first milk they had tasted for two years – and this plain of fine quartz gravel and coarse sand is all studded over with a stubbly grass, in tufts 18 inches high, of a slate green colour, white at the tips. The heat is very great, but there is a faint cool wind, which, however, has little effect on the plague of flies.

I have with me a Syrian, a Moroccan, a Merawi, four Rifaa, and one men each from Aneyza, Russ, and Zilfi. The last describes himself as an eyewitness of Shakespeare's death.[1] He says he was with Ibn Saoud's artillery, looking through his field glasses and very conspicuous, since he was wearing full British uniform and a sun helmet over all. He was therefore easily picked out, and was shot at long range. His helmet was taken into Medina, and publicly exhibited as proof to all Moslems that Ibn Saoud was a traitor to Islam, and had permitted Christians into his country. There were great demonstrations in Medina, and the hat is still displayed in the Serai, with an inscription pointing its moral.

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[1] The explorer William Henry Shakespear (1878–1915) was one of the first to map Northern and Eastern Arabia. Political Agent and military adviser to Ibn Saud, he was killed in the Battle of Jarrab (24 January 1915).

We started again at 2.35 p.m. (120°) across W. Marrakh, which runs out to westward to the Makassar just south of Harrat Gelib, and at 3 p.m. entered Harrat Gara. It fills a wadi, running north, and falls down in steps or waves to Wadi Marukh, where it is cut short. We had mounted its first terrace by 3.25, and found a small sand and grass plain in the lava of the second step. We then turned east, up Wadi Gara, which is one of the main sources of the lava flow. The lava was in a great rope, down the centre of the valley, whose water had cut for itself a deep bed in the granite each side. At 4 p.m. a stream of lava came in from the south, and we crossed it, and the edge of the main stream, and other side streams, very slowly and painfully till 4.50 p.m. The north bank of the wadi was a straight line of hills. At 4.50 p.m. we passed a first crater, of fine sifted black ash and earth, just south of the road, and at 5.10 p.m. halted at the tent of Sheikh Fahad el-Hamshah, who produced bowl after bowl of milk, till 10 p.m, and then rice and a dismembered sheep. Camels and men all very tired, for the going over the harrah is vile. Harrah looks like scrambled eggs that have gone very wrong, and affords the worst going imaginable for man or beast.

March 14.

Started at 5.40 a.m., and at 6.25 turned 120° with the valley, and then sharply to the left up the slope between a group of cones of black ash from a huge crater to the south. At 7.10 a.m. reached the watershed (Ras Gara) and went down the eastern slope of the valley, passing the remains of what was perhaps a fort, of rough uncut stones, rectangular, about 40 feet wide and 100 feet long. Walls about three feet thick, and now not more than four feet high. Descent was very bad; at 8 a.m. left the main valley and stopped at 8.20 a.m. at the end of the harrah, up a side-valley, in the tents of sheikh Mualeh, a relative of Fahad. We halted till 9.35 a.m., and then marched 120° till 10 a.m. when we reached the head of the valley, across remains of old settlement and fields. At 10.10 a.m. we had crossed a small spur into a tiny valley between hills, which led us at once to a kind of chimney, up which the camels had to climb till 10.25 a.m. It was dangerous riding up, and most of us walked. From the top there was an easy run down Wadi Shweita till 11.20 a.m., when it ran into Wadi Murramiya, one of the most important tributaries from the Juheiniya into Wadi Hamdh. The wadi is filled all across the middle with bristling harrah, but a clear path exists each side. We marched along the west edge till 11.50 a.m., when we struck round a bay of lava, and camped under a tree in a grassy dell. In the hollows and sandy places of the harrah you find wonderful vegetation, which affords the best grazing in the country. Flowers grow freely, and the grass is really green and juicy. The green looks the more wonderful in comparison with the blue-black naked crusts and twists of jagged rock all around. Harrah seems to be either loose piles of fist- or head-sized stones, rubbed together and rounded, possible for camels; or solid, almost crystallised, fronds of rock, which are impossible to cross.

We mounted again at 2.15 p.m. and crossed the remaining harrah in a few minutes to a flat plain, containing stone circles and cairns. At 2.40 p.m. this came to its end, and we turned 125° up an easy pass. At 3 p.m. reached the watershed (broad and flat) and entered Wadi Cheft, which is half-a-mile wide, straight, overgrown with brushwood and lined with hills. At its lower end (3.45 p.m.) was a field about a quarter of a mile square, ploughed two years ago. This was the first field I had seen in the Juheiniya, though many others are reported. The field ended in a harrah which we crossed – the worst road yet experienced on the march. We have had many bad roads, but this is awful. The path zigzagged across the harrah, which is very deep and piled up and broken. At 4.30 p.m. we reached the southern side (it was going north) and climbed a low watershed into a smooth valley, which turned down towards W. Murramiya, at 4.40 p.m. We climbed a feeder for a few minutes, and then rode down into W. Murramiya. Its central harrah was easy to cross, and took five minutes only, and we then climbed up its further bank – it is here a plain about two miles wide, covered with large trees (W. Ghadirat Murramiya) till near the eastern hill border. Along this we marched, by a beautiful road, till dark. We could see the lava a mile and a half to our right, and behind it a break in the hills and high ranges in the distance. At 6 p.m. it got dark and a hill rose up in the centre of the valley. About 6.30 p.m. we crossed an imperceptible watershed, and rode down W. Tleih, till we stopped at 7 p.m.

March 15.

Rode at 5.30 a.m. down the valley, which became more and more green as it got lower. The hills each side were low at first, but then J. Elif on the right, and later J. Keshra on the left, raised the level. At 8 a.m. we passed a conical hill in the valley, below Keshra, and at 8.30 a.m. went over a low watershed into a parallel valley; at 9.20 a.m. this opened into W. Ais at Abu Markha, where the valley is about a mile wide, more thickly wooded than most Hejaz valleys, and with a great 30-foot deep water hole to an underground stream in its side. Wadi Ais is here sharply limited by hills on its south side, but is open on its north, with all the Tleib system of valleys running down into it. I found

Sidi Abdullah at Abu Markha, just dismounting from his camel, after his march here from Bir el-Amri.

Time taken from Wejh to Wadi Ais: 47 hours.

Road was a by-road, impossible for any but pack-animals and not for regular or extended use by them.

Average speed of camels about 3 miles per hour.

T.E.L.
Wejh, 21.4.17

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72. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (24 April 1917)

Colonel Wilson

III.

Abu Markha to Madahrij

After returning from Abu el-Naam with Sherif Shakir, I stopped a short while with Sidi Abdullah, and on Monday, 2 April, marched at 2.20 a.m. for the railway to the north of Heidia. I took with me Dakhilallah el Gadhi with 40 Juheinah, and had as well Sultan el Abbud (Ateibah), Sherif Abdullah, and Sherif Agab (two sons of Hamza el Feir), and Mohammed el Gadhi. A machine gun with six men and seven infantrymen (Syrians) came along also, as my hope was to derail a train with a Garland mine, and then attack it from a previously prepared machine-gun position. Sherif Shakir rode the first half-hour with us.

We marched down Wadi Ais by the same road as that to Abu el Naam to the village site at 6.20 p.m. Instead of leaving Wadi Ais at this point, we turned north with the valley, and camped at 7 p.m. opposite Magreh el Semn, under hills on the left bank of the wadi.

Tuesday, April 3

Marched at 5.20 a.m. up the wadi at 50° till 5.35 a.m., and then swung round towards 20° in a curve till 6 a.m., aiming direct at J. Shemail, a great mass, which deflects the valley westward. At 5.40 a.m. we were opposite the mouth of W. Serum, and at 5.55 a.m. passed Bir Bedair on our left. At 6 a.m. we were opposite the point of J. Shemail, and the wadi, which had been clear and broad and shingly, narrowed down. At 6.30 a.m. Wadi Gharid came in on the left (it is the quickest way to Abu Markha, but steep), and at 6.40 a.m. we were opposite Bir Bedia, in the mouth of Seil Bedia on the left of our road. Seil Bedia rises near Seil Osman. The wadi now widened out and became full of large trees, and more green than any wadi I had seen in the Hejaz. It has come down in flood twice this year, and affords splendid pasturage. We were now going about 40° and at 7.15 a.m. reached Bir el Murebba, in a broad part of Wadi Ais, where it became a small and very beautiful plain. We then turned 60° and marched down the wadi till 7.45 a.m., when we halted opposite the mouth of Seil el-Howeiti (from J. Serd). At 1.15 p.m. we marched again, and at 1.45 p.m. reached Ribiaan, the last well in Wadi Ais. The well is lined with a rough stone steyning, and is about ten feet in diameter and fifteen feet deep; water very slightly brackish. Wadi Ais at this point leaves the hills, and enters a great open plain, studded with low mounds. This plain is the common bed (or united beds) of, amongst others, Wadi Ais, Wadi Hamdh, W. Tubja, W. Turar, and W. Jizal (Gizal or Qizal, since the *qāf*[1] is pronounced *ğīm* by the Juheimah and eastern Billi). In the north the plain is bounded by J. Gussa, on the Billi bank of the Hamdh. On the west, to Wadi Ais, by J. Jasim (Kasim, Qasim or Gasim to taste; it is a *qāf*), and south of Wadi Ais by J. Urn Reitba, continued in J. Tareif and J. Ajrad. On the east it is bounded by J. Nahar, the east bank of W. Jizal, and then by el-Mreikat, J. Jindal, and J. Unseih. On the south it runs down into el-Jurf and el-Magrah, and J. Antar is clearly visible from the mouth of Wadi Ais, forming the southern boundary of the plain, miles away towards Medina.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 51, 23 May 1917, with the editorial title 'Weij to Wadi Ais and back', but in reality, it is a continuation of the previous one, FO/882/6 HRG/17/35, typed on the same typewriter. It occupies pp. 345–7.

We left the direct road a little, when we mounted at 2.10 p.m. and marched a little way north-east. At 2.40 p.m. we left Wadi Ais and crossed a low bank into El Fershah, a parallel wadi, in which were many tents of Harb and Aneza, come by permission into the Juheinah dira for pasture. We camped near them (they refused us hospitality) at 3.20 p.m.

Wednesday, April 4

Rode at 5.30 a.m. and at 6.15 a.m. crossed the level bed of Wadi Turaa, and Wadi Hamdh at 6.45 a.m. The Hamdh was as full of aslam wood as at Abu Zereibat and had the same hummocky bed, with sandy blisters over it – but it was only about 200 yards wide, and shallow. We halted at 8 a.m. in W. Tubja, which was a sort of wilderness garden, with a profusion of grass and shrubs in which the camels rejoiced. The weather was very hot, with a burning sun that made the sandy ground impossible for me to walk on barefoot. The Arabs have soles like asbestos, and made little complaint, except of the warmth of the air. There had been thunder all yesterday, and half-a-dozen showers of rain last night and today. J. Serd and J. Kasim (Jasim etc.) were wrapped in shafts and sheets of a dark blue and yellow vapour that seemed motionless and solid. We marched across W. Tubja again at 1.20 p.m. About 1.40 we noticed that part of the yellow cloud from J. Serd was approaching us, against the wind, raising scores of dust-devils before its feet. It also produced two dust spouts, tight and symmetrical, stationary columns like chimneys, one to the right and one to the left of its advance.

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[1] Handwritten by Lawrence with the corresponding character of the twenty-first letter of the Arabic alphabet (*qāf*). Immediately after, he transcribed the corresponding character of the fifth letter of the Arabic alphabet (*ğīm*).

When it got nearer, the wind, which had been scorching us from the northeast, changed suddenly, and became bitterly cold and damp, from the S.W. It increased greatly in violence, and at the same time the sunlight disappeared and the air became thick and ochre yellow. About 3 minutes later the advancing brown wall (I think it was about 1,500 feet high) struck us, and proved to be a blanket of dust, and large grains of sand, twisting and turning most violently with itself, and at the same time advancing east at about forty miles an hour. The internal whirling winds had the most bizarre effect. They tore our cloaks from us, turned our camels sometimes right round, and sometimes drew them together in a vortex, and large bushes, tufts of grass, and small trees were torn up clean by the roots, in a dense cloud of the soil about them, and were driven against us, or dashed over our heads, with sometimes dangerous force. We were never blinded – it was always possible to see seven or eight feet each side – but it was risky to look out, since one never knew if one would meet a flying tree, or a rush of pebbles, or a column of dust.

This *hubbub* lasted for eighteen minutes, and then ceased nearly as suddenly as it had come, and while we and our clothes and camels were all smothered in dust and yellow from head to foot, down burst torrents of rain, and muddied us to the skin. The wind swung round to the north, and the rain drove before it through our cloaks, and chilled us through and through. At 3 p.m. we had crossed the plain and entered the bare valley of W. Dhaiji, which cuts through J. Jindal at its southern end, from the railway to the Hamdh. It is fairly broad at first, sandy, with precipitous rock walls. We rode up it till 4 p.m. and left our camels in a side valley, and climbed a hill to see the line. The hill was of naked rock, and with the wet and the numbing cold the Ateiba servant of Sultan el Abbud lost his nerve, pitched over a cliff, and smashed his skull to pieces. It was our only casualty on the trip.

When we got to the hill-top it was too thick weather to see the railway, so I returned to the camels, and shivered by them for an hour or two. We were stumbled upon by a mounted man, with whom we exchanged ineffectual shots, and were annoyed by this, as surprise was essential, and we could hear the bugles of Madahrij sounding recall and supper in the station, which was also an irritation. However, at 9 p.m. the explosives came up, with the rest of the party, and I started out with Sultan, Dakhilallah and Mohammed el-Gadhi for the line.

We had some delay in finding a machine-gun position, for the railway runs everywhere near the eastern hills of the valley, and the valley is about 3,000 yards broad. However, eventually, we found a place opposite kilometre 1121, and I laid a mine (trigger central, with rail-cutting charges 15 yards north and south of it respectively) with some difficulty owing to the rain, at 12 p.m. It took till 1.45 a.m. to cover up the traces of the digging, and we left the whole bank, and the sandy plain each side, as covered with huge footmarks as though a school of elephants had danced on it, and made tracks that a blind man could have felt. I wiped out most of those on the embankment itself, however, by walking up and down in shoes over it. Such prints are indistinguishable from the daily footmarks of the patrol inspecting the line.

We got back to the new position at 2.30 a.m. (still raining and blowing and very cold) and sat about on stones till dawn, when the camels and machine gun came up. Dakhilallah, who had been guide and leader all night, now sent out patrols and sentries and outposts in all directions, and went on a hill-top himself with glasses to watch the line. The sun fortunately came out, so we were able to get dry and warm, and by midday were again gasping in the heat. A cotton shirt is a handy garment, but not adaptable to such sudden changes of temperature.

Thursday, *April 5*

At 6 a.m. a trolly with four men and a sergeant as a passenger came from Hedia (Haraimil) to Madahrij, passing over the mine without stopping. A working party of sixty men came out of Madahrij, and began to replace five telegraph poles blown down near the station the day before by the *hubbub*. At 7.30 a.m. a patrol of eleven men marched south along the line, two inspecting each rail minutely, one walking along the bank in charge, and then at fifty yards interval right and left of the line, looking for tracks. At km 1121 they found abundance of the latter, and concentrated on the permanent way, and wandered up and down it, and scratched the ballast, and thought for a prolonged period. They then went on to near J. Sueij (Sueij, Sueik, or Sueiq, to taste), and exchanged greetings with the Hedia patrol. At 8.30 a.m. a train of nine trucks, packed with women, children and household effects came up from Hedia, and ran over the mine without exploding it, rather to our relief, since they were not quite the prize we had been hoping for.

The Juheinah were greatly excited when the train came along, and all rushed up to Dakhilallah's lookout, where we were, to see it. Our stone zariba had been made for five only, so that the hill-top became suddenly and visibly populous. This was too much for the nerves of Madahrij, which called in its working party, and opened a brisk rifle fire on us, at about 5,000 yards. Hadiyah (or rather its outpost on a hill-top) was encouraged by this to take a share. As they were about 1,200 yards off, they retained their fire, but played selections on the bugle from 8.30 a.m till 4 p.m.

This disclosure of ourselves put us in rather an unfortunate position. The Juheinah and myself were on camels, and therefore pretty safe, but the machine-gun was a sledge-maxim (German) and very heavy. It was on a mule, and the mules could only walk. Our position was between Madahrij (200 men) and Hedia (1100 men), with Hadiyah in Wadi Tubja, behind our backs. I was afraid of their trying to cut us off in the rear, and after consulting Dakhilallah we rode past Madahrij to the head of W. Um Reikham, which runs into Tubja just north of J. Jindel, and sent the mules with an escort of fifteen Juheinah back to Wadi Ais. Had the Turks attacked us, the few Juheinah with me would not have been enough to cover the retreat of the gun: and the gunners were Meccan tailors, inexpert at handling it.

Dakhilallah, Sultan Mohammed and myself then rode back to the head of Wadi Dhaije, and camped at 9.40 a.m. under some good shady trees, from which we could see the line. This appeared to annoy the Turks, who shot and trumpeted at us incessantly, till about 4.30 p.m. No trains passed during this time – I fancy our presence held up the traffic, for a lone engine came down from the north to Madahrij, and there was also heavy smoke from Hadiyah station.

At 4.30 p.m. the Turkish noise stopped, and we got on our camels at 5 p.m. and rode out slowly across the plain towards the line. Madahrij revived in a paroxysm of rifle fire (4,000 yards, no damage) and all the trumpets of Hedia began again. Dakhilallah was most pleased. We went straight to kilometre 1121, and made the camels kneel beside the line, while Dakhilallah (whose strong piety has a vein of humour) called the idhan, and led the sunset prayer between the rails. As soon as it got dark the Turks became quiet, and I dug up the mine (a most unpleasant proceeding: laying a Garland mine is shaky work, but scrabbling along a line for 100 yards in the ballast looking for a trigger that is connected with two powerful charges must be a quite uninsurable occupation), and I found it had sunk a sixteenth of an inch, probably owing to the damp ground. We replaced it, and then fired a number of charges along the rails between us and Madahrij with great effect. We also cut up a good deal of telegraph wire and a number of poles, and at 7.30 p.m. rode off down W. Dhaije again. At 9 p.m. we reached the Tubja-Hamdh plain, and galloped across it furiously, passing Wadi Hamdh, W. Turaa, W. Abu Marra, and reaching El Fershah and the machine-gun camp at 12.15 a.m.

Friday, April 6

Started at 6 a.m., reached Rubiaan at 7 a.m., and left it at 7.15 a.m. Wadi Ais had been down in flood since we left, and the surface was all shining with white slime and pools of soft grey water. The camels slipped over this most amusingly, and most of the party went down. Dakhilallah therefore drew us up a mouth of Seil Howeiti, and across its delta, and over a little pass into the eastern bay of the plain of Murebba in Wadi Ais. We crossed this, passed Seil Badia, and halted at 9.15 a.m. in the mouth of W. Gharid. We mounted again at 2.45 p.m. and rode slowly (everything was stiff and tired) to the bend of

Wadi Ais by the ruins at 4.45 p.m., where we camped for the night. Our two messengers who had been left in Dhaije came in late, and reported that the mine (which we had heard explode very vigorously at 7.30 a.m. this morning) had gone off north and south of a locomotive with rails and about 300 soldiers, arriving from Hedia to repair our damage. The quantity of Turks frightened our men away, so I cannot say if any inconvenience was caused the train; but the break in the line was not repaired for five days, which looks as though something had delayed them.

Saturday, 7 *April*
We started at 1 a.m. and slept the rest of the night in Marraha from 2.30 a.m. till 6 a.m. Then rode and reached Abu Markha at 8 a.m.

The results of this trip were to show me the rare value of Dakhilallah and his son. Their humour makes railway breaking a pleasure to them; their authority keeps the Juheinah in better order than ever I have seen; and old Dakhilallah has grown grey in successful ghazzus, and is as careful and astute as any raider could be.

It also showed that Garland mines, properly laid, are impossible for the Turks to detect. Eleven men searched for my mine for twenty minutes. Also that the Turkish garrisons suffer badly from nerves; and that a machine-gun party to deal with stranded locomotives may require great mobility in retreat or advance, and should be, if possible, mounted on the same kind of animal as the tribal escort.

T.E. Lawrence
Weij,
24.4.17

73. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (24 April 1917)

Colonel Wilson,
(4)
Abu Markha to Wejh

When Sidi Abdullah had made arrangements for a nightly cutting of the railway, I decided that I might return to Wejh. I started therefore at 6 a.m. on [space left blank] April, with three Ageyl, and Mohammed el-Gadhi, with about a dozen of his followers. Sherif Shakir put us on our way for the first half hour.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 51, 23 May 1917, as a simple paragraph of 'From Weij to Wadi Ais and back', with the title 'From Abu Markha to Weij'. In reality, it is the continuation of the previous one, FO/882/6 HRG/17/35, on a new numbered sheet '(4)' always typed on the same typewriter. It occupies pp. 348–9. Here I have followed the original typescript which has variations from the printed version.

At 7 a.m. we reached the low watershed into W. Tleib, which we had crossed on the journey down to Wadi Ais. We marched across Wadi Tleib, and up a steep side-valley to the north of Jebel Keshra. At 8.55 a.m. we reached the head of this, and went down an easy slope into W. Saura, turning a little right out of our road to some tents at 9.20 a.m., where we halted. They fed us very hospitably, and at 12.50 p.m. we rode across Wadi Saura, which comes from the east, and up a northern branch of it to the common origin of W. Osman and Wadi Bedia, on the eastern slope of J. Riam, at 2.5 p.m. On the western slope of Riam is the common source of W. Tleib and W. Murimiya. We rode down W. Osman (which is fit for gunwheels, except for about 150 yards at its head, where rock cutting would be necessary), twisting and turning with it, till 5 p.m., when, at a right angled turn, we saw on our left Magrah el Ithrara, whose western half drains into Murramiya. We halted at 6.15 p.m. in the mouth of W. Geraia.

[space left blank] *April*
Rode at 5.5 a.m. and at once Wadi Osman widened out. We rode across it to the tents of Dakhilallah at 5.55 a.m. We had to stop there till 1.35 p.m. while they prepared saffron rice and a lamb. We then rode up a side valley, and down into Osman again at 2.15 p.m. We followed it down (it was not so zigzag in its course as it had been yesterday) till 4 p.m., when we turned abruptly to the right, and found ourselves in Wadi Hamdh, which here flows in a narrow rock-walled valley, about 200 yards wide. The valley is bare at the edges, of hard damp sand. In the middle it is packed with aslam wood, the ground being leprous, and of a white salty colour, with soft bulging patches where bushes grow or grew. The water-beds are cut in a clean light clayey soil from one to eight feet deep, and in the central one was a ghadir (brought by W. Osman) about 2 feet deep, 250 feet long, and 12 feet broad. The water was sweet and good. Half a mile above the Ghadir, Wadi Hamdh ran into Jebel Muraishida, and turned abruptly north to get round it. Fagir is said to be about 7 miles up. From Ghadir Osman we rode at 6.30 p.m. along Hamdh, and at 7.15 p.m. were opposite the break where the road from Wadi Osman to Agila reaches the Hamdh. Our course now 280°. At 7.30 p.m. we turned 300°, and at 8.20 p.m. diverged from the bed of Hamdh to the left, to sleep. Wadi Hamdh is clearly distinguished from any other Hejaz Wadi (except W. Yenbo) that I have seen, by the damp chill that strikes up from its valley. This is of course most obvious at night, when the mist rises, and everything glistens with damp – but even in daytime Wadi Hamdh feels raw and cold and un-natural.

[space left blank] *April*
Started at 5.20 a.m. along Wadi Hamdh. At 6.15 a.m. Wadi Murmieh came in on the left; it forms by far the best road from Hamdh to Ais, and from Wejh to Sidi Abdulla is the quickest and smoothest road. We rode down it, into the

brushwood of W. Hamdh, where we found large pools of rainwater, some fresh, others gone very green and stale. We then crossed the valley, left Wadi Doura on our right (the confluence of Doura and Murramiya makes the plain of Agila, whose brackish well is the only permanent supply in the district till Faqeir is reached) and rode past Bir Agila (on the left, in the Hamdh valley) over a low watershed, to the landing ground at Um Jarad at 7.20 a.m. From this point Major Ross's map is available. It is admirable. I rode till W. Methar at 10.15 a.m., camped till 3 p.m., and then rode slowly (one of us fell off his camel when racing and broke his arm and had to be left behind) till 6.20 p.m., when we halted, with a narrow gorge to the south in which are rock-pools of water.

[space left blank] *April*
Started at 5 a.m. Halted at 6 a.m. in Wadi Melha, north of the road, which contains good water-pools. Rode again, 6.45 a.m. till 10.10 a.m., when we halted till 2.20 p.m. We then marched to Bir ibn Rifada in Khanthila, at 4.50 p.m. There are at least 5 wells in and near W. Khanthila, and about them are small plants of dôm-palm, one or two grown-up dôm-palms, and, at Bir ibn Rifada, the drying remains of the palm and vegetable garden that Suleiman began to make. The well-water had a purgative effect on our camels. We rode again at 5.30 p.m. and camped between the Raals at 7.30 p.m.

[space left blank] *April*
Started again at 1.36 a.m. and rode till 8.45 a.m. in the south edge of Murra. From 8 a.m., when men and camels were all tired, it seemed fit to the boy, Mohd el Gadhi, to run races. So he took most of his clothes off, got off his camel and challenged any of us mounted to race him to a clump of trees on the slope ahead, for a pound English. All the party started off at once; the distance turned out about ¾ of a mile, uphill, over heavy sand, which I expect was more than Mohd had bargained for; though he won by inches, he was absolutely done and collapsed bleeding from his mouth and nose. Some of our camels were very fast, and when racing in a mob, as we were, they do their best. We put him on his camel, at 11 a.m.; when we started off to march to Wejh at 5 p.m., he was quite fit, and again playing all the little jests that had enlivened the march from Abu Markha. If you come up quietly behind a camel, poke a stick up its rump, and screech, it plunges off at a gallop, very disconcerting to its rider. It is also good fun to cannon another galloping camel into a tree; either the tree goes down (Hejaz trees are very unstable things) or the rider is scratched, or best of all, is swept off his saddle and left hanging on a thorny branch. This counts a bull, and is very popular with the rest of the party.

The Bedir are odd people. Travelling with them is unsatisfactory for an Englishman unless he has patience deep and wide as the sea. They are

absolute slaves of their appetites, with no stamina of mind, drunkards for coffee, milk or water, gluttons for stewed meat, shameless beggars for tobacco. A cigarette goes round four men in the tent before it is finished; it would be intolerable manners to smoke it all. They dream for weeks before and after their rare sexual exercises, and spend their days titillating themselves and their friends with bawdy tales. Had the circumstances of their life given them greater resources or opportunity, the Beduins would be mere sensualists. It is the poverty of Arabia which makes them simple, continent and enduring. If they suspect you want to drive them, either they are mulish or they go away: if you know them, and have the time and give the trouble to present things their way, then they in turn will do your pleasure. Whether the results you gain are worth the effort you put forth, no man knoweth. I think Europeans could not or would not spend the time and thought and tact their sheikhs and emirs expend each day, on such meagre objects. Their processes are clear, their minds moving as one's own moves, with nothing incomprehensible or radically different, and they will follow us, if we can endure with them, and play their game. The pity is we break down with exasperation, and throw them over.
T.E.L.
Weij 24.4.17

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74. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (26 April 1917)
Colonel Wilson,
(5)
Notes

Talaat in 1913, showed great anxiety about the situation in the Hedjaz. Its subjugation and the imposition of military service there had been a favourite project. Mahmud Shevket[2] and the Turkish ministry generally looked upon the situation as disquieting, on account of the great hold Husein Pasha was getting on the people. This was the real reason of Wahib's appointment, and his withdrawal was a personal triumph for Feisul, who secured from Talaat a promise that he would be tried by court marshall [*sic*] for infringing the privileges of the Hedjaz.

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[1] Typescript sent from Weij on 26 April 1917, signed. Record no. FO/882/14 MIS/17/5. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 50, 13 May 1917, with the title 'Antecedents of the Hejaz Revolt', heavily abbreviated and anthologized, with the following opening note: 'Under date April 26, Captain Lawrence sends the following notes on miscellaneous topics. They were collected by him during his sojourn with Abdullah in Wadi Ais.' The titles in italics in the printed version were the editorial ones. Here I followed the original typescript.

[2] Mahmud Shevket (1856–1913) was a Turkish general trained at the German military school. He created the Turkish air force in 1911. A little later, Wahib Pasha was appointed Governor of the Turkish Red Sea provinces that included Hejaz.

Sherif Abdulla was regarded as the probable cause of trouble in the Hedjaz, and to keep him out of it he was offered first the Wakf Ministry and then the Vilayet of Yemen. He saw the idea, and refused the appointments. Abdullah has a low opinion of Talaat's judgement, and regards him as brutal and ignorant. This contrasts most curiously with Deedes' verdict.

Abdullah gave the eastern Ateiba (over whom he has little control, and they would probably not have come to the Hedjaz to fight for him, had he asked them) orders to help Ibn Saoud against Ibn Rashid. It was partly on account of this that Ibn Rashid declared war on the Sherif. Abdulla doesn't really care at all if they help Ibn Saoud or not – but the order was an assumption of control over all the Ateibah (which Abdulla pretends to) in a form to which Ibn Saoud could hardly object with grace.

The Turks gave decorations (mentioned in AB 44) to Aida, Towala, and Fagir Sheikhs. The recipients decided to show their new orders to Sidi Abdulla, but, as they were crossing the line near Toweira, they ran into a Turkish patrol, and the camel carrying their personal baggage was killed and had to be abandoned. The Turks have thus received back the insignia.

The Ateiba believe that Christians wear hats so that the projecting brims may intervene between their eyes and the uncongenial sight of God.

At the time of the meeting between Sherif Abdulla and Mr. Storrs in Jiddah, in October, 1916, Colonel Bremond was disturbed by reports that the Sherif was listening to Turkish pourparlers on the subject of an arrangement. We obtained a denial from Sidi Abdulla. It seems he had himself told Colonel Bremond the tale, in the hope that the British might be led to take more vigorous action in support of the Arab Army at Rabegh. Abdulla says however that no official word about an agreement has ever come from Turkey – though the Sherif has been approached 50 times by intermediaries.

The prewar plan of Sherif Abdulla to secure the independence of Hedjaz (as a preliminary to the formation of an Arab State) was to lay sudden hands on the Pilgrims at Mecca during the great feast. He estimated that the foreign Governments concerned (England, France, Italy, and Holland) would bring pressure on the Porte to secure their release. When the Porte's efforts had failed they would have had to approach the Sherif direct, and would have found him anxious to do all in his power to meet their wishes, in exchange for a promise of immunity from Turkey in the future.

This action had been fixed (provisionally) for 1915, but was quashed by the war.

Dakhilallah el Kadhi, who has had good means of judging, regards the Billi as less than half the strength of the Juheina, and a little less than the tribes under Ferhan el-Aida. Ferhan (who is with Abdulla) is the son of Motlog Allayda, Doughty's old host. Dakhilallah says that Billi and Howeitat are much fiercer fighters than Wuld Ali or Ateiba. Indeed, I notice a contempt for the Ateiba among the Juheina, and think that there is a good deal of justification for the feeling.

Sherif Hussein seems to have a firm way with him. A Nurith Sherif was brought before him for some offense, and the Sherif found him guilty. He therefore took up his "debsa" (a wooden knob-kerry, much carried by the Taif Arabs, and indeed generally – "dubbus" in Syria) and hit him on the right side of his head. The man collapsed on the ground, Emir Hussein laid down the club while he was being brought to, and Shakir hid it behind some cushions. The Emir routed about the room till he found it, cursed Shakir, and hit the Hurith on the left side of the head, and before he could fall down again, on the back of the head. He fainted again, and the Sherif allowed him to be taken out to his home.

On another occasion, during Ghazzu, Emir Hussein from his tent saw a soldier steal a bundle from the saddle bags of a Beduin, and hide it under his mat. He said nothing, till the Beduin missed his stuff, and cried his loss about the camp. He then called up the thief, and asked him if he knew anything about it. The man denied all knowledge. The Emir had his mat turned back, and the bundle was visible. The man collapsed, and was carried back to Mecca, when he died 20 days later.

Shakir (who is no respecter of elder persons) says that he has tried to make the Sherif laugh on public occasions time out of number, with scant success, though they are merry enough indoors when the mood comes. The Emir dislikes long speeches, compliments, and tobacco smoke. He was persuaded to smoke a cigarette at Muna by Abbas Hilmi,[1] and the event was a seven days topic in Mecca.

Shakir says that Sidi Ali is a hadhari (townsman) and the other brother Arab. Abdulla and Zeid are most in the confidence of their father.

Abdulla's intimates in Wadi Ais were Shakir, Sherif Faugan el Hurith, Dair Khlaid of Wadi Bisha, Sultan el Abbud, Abdulla ibn Mesfer his mudhaifi (vale guest-master) Hoshan his master of horses, Si'Raho, the Moroccan, Dr Aissa el Imam, and Sheik Othman the Yemani. I have described Shakir rather fully, as the most likely of them all to become important himself, though he will never be so of his own initiative, but as the figure head, or tool of someone more ambitious and persevering than himself.

Sherif Fauzan el Hurith is a brother of Ahmed el Hasaa (not Hadha as in Handbook [of Hejaz]), aged about 30, with a very thin beard and moustache, a quiet simple manner, very engaging disposition. He is a most celebrated warrior, and has both brains and courage. At present he is Emir of Modhig

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[1] Abbas Hilmi (1874–1944) was the Ottoman viceroy of Egypt and the Sudan until December 1914. He raised the idea of an Arab nationalism aimed at independence and was also ready to accept the help of other great powers against the British.

(Mothiq in Arab, Mothij in speech of the people) the H.Q. of the Hurit clan of 200 Ashraf. Ali ibn Areidh is one of their heads, but the son of a slave-woman. He is about 45–50 years old, vigorous and hugely strong physically, said to be worthy any three Ashraf in love and war. The Hurith pretend that they are Ateiba Ashraf, but persist in staying in Modhij, while the Ateiba are moving east. They have therefore now more to do with Sebai or Hudheil, and Shakir denies altogether that they have part or parcel with his Ateiba. Old Sherif Zeid was as thick with the Ateiba as Shakir, his son is, and so there is a family tie between them. Fauzan is poor, I fancy, and is not merry enough to be quite of the inner circle of Abdulla's friends – but he has a very capable subordinate commander, which is valuable thing in the Hedjaz, where you have good people at hand and foot, and in the middle no one qualified to look after 1,000 men, or do more than the most trifling operation undirected.

Emir Khalib is a sick man – malaria from his Wadi, I believe – so I saw little of him. He was a tall thin spare-faced hairy man of about 40, very silent. He is an Abdilla, and the Sherif appointment in Wadi Bisha. Abdulla says that the Sherif has no right in Wadi Bisha, but obtained a footing on the pretext that he would forestall the Turks, and has ever since increased and increased his influence till the Wadi is very nearly his private property. Part of it is Ateiba owned but on account of the fever Arabs cannot live there, and nearly all the population is negro.

Sultan el Abbud is the Sheikh of his section of the Ateiba, not very powerful, or important, except as a confidant of Emir Abdulla, and his bosom companion. Abdulla's 3 year old son, Naif, is in Sultan's tent, and Sultan carried off Sidi Abdulla from the Meteir, when he was wounded through the thighs in Nejd. He and Abdulla are quite inseparable.

Sultan is about 25, pure Beduin, with a dark square comic face, powerful figure, and an air of energy and activity rare in the tribes. He is a tiger in a fight, and an inseparable "ragger" at all other times. Very restless, always wandering about, scratching his head, and pulling his head dress away. If a camel strays, or there is a job to be done Sultan is up and away first, barefoot and bareheaded with his ten tails of black hair dancing in the wind. He is all over wounds, gained in every fight he has entered (and he gets into everything going) down to the affair with Eshraf, who shot him through the shoulders. Shakir and he scrimmage all over Abdulla's tent, and tear each others clothes to pieces with endless pleasure. His good temper is constant and he is a most energetic and devoted assitant at every opportunity, but has no education, or aims or knowledge other than of Beduin things, and could not be given any independent command.

Abdulla ibn Mesfer, Abdulla's Mudhaifi, is very bad at his job, but a cheerful madcap whom Abdulla is very fond of, and a man of great keenness and energy in the field. He comes from Taif and is short slight, with a drawn hollow face, and a thin beard: age about 27. When a fight begins he jumps on his horse and gets into it, and leaves Abdulla's stuff to look after itself. He is much used as the leader of small riding parties because of his dash. Had he an important force I would expect to hear of some wild disaster, due to his hap hazard ways.

Hoshan is an Ateiba lad, of about 19. Abdulla has a lot of these good looking page-lads about him. They serve as mounted orderlies, and do a lot of odd jobs for him, and have access to his tent, and eat with the "family" when they please. They are however paid retainers only, and not men of birth.

Si'Raho is a very French Algerian, whom Abdulla is teaching Arabic, and trying to make an oriental again. He is very nice fellow, a keen professional cavalryman, but useful and very popular in the camp. The gunners and machine gunners have no advocate at H.Q. but himself.

Assa el Imam must be well-known in Egypt since he was held for months as a political prisoner. He is rather the typical Turkish doctor-conspirator and quite harmless. Abdulla pays little heed to him.

Sheik Othman is a Yemeni, many years in Mecca and Taif. He is fully educated in Arabic things, a grammarian, a poet, a master of religious law, and a theologian. He acts as secretary paymaster and A.A.C. to Sidi Abdulla. A slight short man of perhaps 35, with a white student's face, and a Yemeni voice.

Besides these one often finds in Abdulla's tent Dakhilallah el Kadhi, whom I have described, his son Mohammed, a good looking lad of perhaps 17 with a heavy mouth and sturdily-built, very like his father in many thing but more convivial (he drinks coffee and smokes) a constant but poor singer, greedy, but a man of his word. Dakhilallah ibn Hemeid a great man of the Ateiba, but a thick bucolic youth, with a fatuous smile and no speech. Feihan el Muheiya, a pale faced, bullet headed, jutting bearded man of about 40, also a great among the Ateiba, but apparently also a coffee lord, and many other great Sheikhs in name, who seemed singularly same and tame in the flesh.

Ashraf property – anything with a Sherifial wasm – is exempt from ghazzu or ordinary theft, in theory, and to a large extent in practice. The Sherif has taken advantage of this point for the benefit of his Ageyl, and stamped all their camels with the Aun wasm.

Another Sherifian privilege is that their blood rite is four times that of a layman.

T.E. Lawrence
Weij 26.4 1917

75. *Wilson to Clayton*[1] (28 May 1917)

Hedjaz Operations

[. . .] This Northern move not only brought in fresh tribes but enabled raids to be made against the Railway by demolition parties, in which a fine example of gallantry and energy has been set by Lt. Col. S.F. Newcombe, D.S.O. R.E., Captain T.E. Lawrence, and Bimbashi H. Garland, Egyptian Army, whose demolition work prevented the whole Turkish Garrison at Medina from retiring to the North. [. . .] I would specially bring to His Excellency's notice the names of the following Officers, N.C.Os and men of the British and Egyptian Armies for their excellent services. [. . .] *Captain T.E. Lawrence*. This officer has made several journeys into the interior which, owing to his knowledge of Arabic and having gained the confidence of the Arab leaders, have had valuable results. He organized an attack on the Railway with a portion of Emir Abdulla's army by which a train of seven wagons was destroyed and casualties inflicted on the enemy, he also personally carried out demolition on the railway. His services have been of great value to me and the work he has carried out required both pluck and endurance.

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76. *Report by Clayton*[2] (29 May 1917)

[. . .] From Uweindid Emir Feisal will move with his force across the railway to Jafar depression East of Maan where Auda Abu Tayi (Howeitat Tribe) and Captain Lawrence have been told to collect food and forage sufficient for Feisal's force for 10 days, together with a number of camels up to 1,000.

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77. [*Note by Cornwallis*][3] (9 July 1917)

The Northward Move

Report reaches us from Wejh, under date June 30, as follows: "Audeh abu Tayyeh arrived at Kasr el Azrak, and many Arabs have come to him to submit loyalty and to fight under the flag which was given to him by H.E. Sherif Feisal with Sherif Nasir, Nasib el Bakry and Captain Lawrence.

The Turkish Government hearing that Audeh had joined the Sherif's army, sent a force and destroyed El Gifa wells (Wells east of Maan) knowing that Audeh will make this place his headquarters."

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[1] Typescript dated 28 May 1917, with autograph signature, record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/41. It lists all the military, British and otherwise, involved in the operations in Hejaz.

[2] Sent from Cairo on 29 May 1917, typescript, signed, record no. FO 882/6 HRG/17/44. It is a long account of Feisal's plans and the necessary preparations for the advance on Akaba, of which Clayton assesses the positive aspects and difficulties.

[3] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 56, 9 July 1917. The note is unsigned, and it can be assumed that it was written by Cornwallis who was directing the *Bulletin* at the time.

This is the first news we have had of the doing of Abu Tayyeh since he started north with Captain Lawrence, Sherif Nasir and Nasib el Bakry. Kasr el Azrak is east of Salt, about 120 miles north of the Jafar depression (El Gifa, above). It is doubtful whether we should understand that Captain Lawrence is with him there, or whether in fact the party, after showing itself in the north, has returned to the Maan district and is now directing the operations of the Howeitat, elsewhere reported, whose activity without this direction it is difficult to account for.

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78. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (10 July 1917)

General Clayton,

I left Wejh on May 9th, 1917 with Sherif[1] Nasir Ibn Ali Ibn Radhi Beni Hussein of Medina as O.C. Expedition, and Nessib Bey El Bekri as Political Officer to deal with villagers and townspeople. Sherif Feisal's instructions were to open Akaba for use as a base of supply for the Arab forces, and to sound the possibilities of Sherifian action in East and South Syria.

We marched to Abu Raga where we increased our force to 36 men, and thence to the Railway at km. 810.5 which we dynamited on May 19th. Our route then lay by Fejr to Maigua in Wadi Soilan, for Jarf to see Nuri and Nawwaf. We heard however that they were to the North of us, so marched to Nebk (near Kaf) on June 2nd, where we met Auda Abu Tayi, and the Huweitat. Sherif Nasir stayed in Kaf to enrol Rualla, Shererat and Huweitat for the Akaba expedition.

I rode on June 4th with 2 men into Wald Ali[2] country, via Burga and Seba Biar to Am El Barida near Tudmor on June 8th. Here I met Sheikh Dhami of the Kawakiba Aneza and heard that Hachim was away N.E. and Ibn Murshid confined in Damascus. I therefore went West with Dhami and his 35 men (whom I enrolled) to Ras Baalbek on June 10th and dynamited a small plate girder bridge there.[3] From Ras Baalbek we rode South to El Gabban, in the Ghuta 3 miles from Damascus where on June 13th I met Ali Riza Pasha Rehabi,[4] G.O.C. Damascus. Thence I rode to El Rudeine where I met Sheikh Saad Ed Din Ibn Ali of the Leja[5] and passed on to Salkhad to see Hussein Bey El Atrash.[6] From Salkhad we went to Azrak and saw Nuri and Nawwaf,[7] and returned to Nebk on June 18th.

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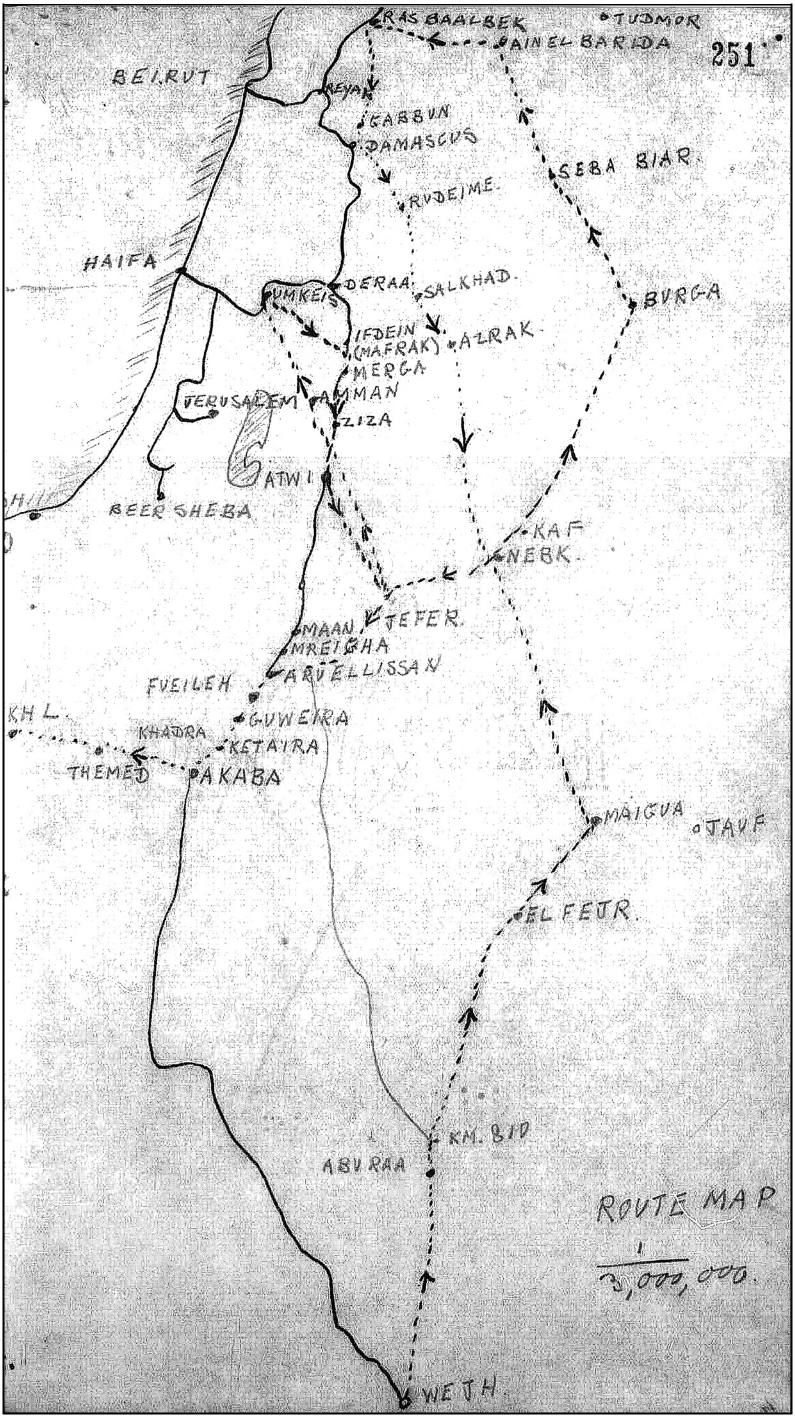
[1] Sent to Cairo on 10 July 1917, original typescript, dated, initialled by hand, stamped 'Secret' at the top left. Record no. FO/882/16 SY/17/7. Lawrence's notes to the text sit at the bottom of each page of the typescript. See Garnett (ed.), *Letters*, pp. 225–31. Reported by J. Wilson on his website www.telstudies.org. Here I followed the original typescript. Clayton, after receiving the report, in turn, expresses his opinion on the future scenario outlined by Lawrence, substantially approving it. The content of this report is summarized (probably by Cornwallis) in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 57, 24 July 1917, with the title 'Arabia. Hejaz. News'.

I found the enrolment finished. Nessib Bey El Bekri went to Salkhad with Hussein El Atrash with the instructions attached,[8] and with Nasir I marched on June 19th to Bair where we reopened the dynamited wells. From Bair I rode to Ziza and saw Fawaz Ibn Faiz,[9] and thence West of Amman to Urn Keis on June 23rd where I looked at railway bridge Z in the Yarmuk valley and saw Shererat and Beni Hassan Sheikhs. From Um Keis I went to Ifdein (Mafrak on the map) [see map, p. 196] the first station below Deraa, and destroyed a stretch of curved rails at km. 173.[10] From Ifdein we rode to Zerga, and thence to Atwi, where we failed to take the station, but killed 3 out of the 5 of the garrison, captured a large flock of sheep and destroyed a telegraph party of 4 men repairing the wire. We also dynamited a stretch of line. From Atwi I rode back to Bair, and rejoined Sherif Nasir who had meantime prepared the Western Huweitat. On June 30th we moved to El Jefer, clearing one well, and thence to km. 479 which we destroyed on a large scale, while a column was attacking N. of Maan near Aneyza. We then marched towards Fuweileh, where the gendarmes post had been destroyed by an advance column. They met us with the news of the re-occupation of Fuweileh by the belated relief expedition of 4/174/59 from Maan. We wiped out the battalion on July 2nd (taking the O.C., a mountain gun and 160 prisoners) at Abu El Lissan, and sent a flying column North which defeated the Turkish post at Hisha (railhead 5 miles East of Shobek), occupied Wadi Musa, Shobek, Tafileh, and is now near Kerak to take action there.

From Fuweileh we captured the post of Mreigha and then moved to Guweira where we met Ibn Jad of the Akaba Huweitat, and took 100 men and 5 officers. From Guweira we marched on to El Kethira (wiping out a post of 3 officers and 140 men) and thence to El Khadra in the North of Wadi Ithm, where the Akaba garrison surrendered at discretion. We entered Akaba on July 6th, with 600 prisoners, about 20 officers, and a German unteroffizier well-borer. I rode the same day for Suez with 8 men and arrived at El Shatt on July 9th.

As a result of the journeys and interviews noted above, between June 5th and July 6th, I am of opinion that given the necessary material assistance Arab Forces can be arranged about the end of August as in the sketch map attached. [see map, p. 197] These levies will not (any more than the Hedjaz Beduin) be capable of fighting a pitched battle, but forces 1, 2, 4 & 5 may be able to ensure a cessation of traffic on the railways in their areas, and forces 6 & 7 should suffice for the expulsion of all Turkish posts in their districts, and the occupation of all ways of communication. Force 3 is our striking force (of perhaps 6,000 not bad men) and may be able to rush Deraat, or at least should cut off the garrison there and hold up the line in the neighbourhood. I would propose to cut the bridge at Hemmah from Um Keis by


RAS BAALBEK
TUDMOR
AIN EL BARIDA
251
BEIRUT
REYAK
GABBUN
DAMASCUS
RUDEIME
SEBA BIAR
HAIFA
DERAA
SALKHAD
BURGA
UMKEIS
IFDEIN
(MAFRAK)
AZRAK
MERGA
JERUSALEM
AMMAN
ZIZA
ATWI
BEER SHEBA
KAF
NEBK
JEFER
MAAN
MREIGHA
ARUELLISSAN
FUEILEH
GUWEIRA
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KHADRA
KETAIRA
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AKABA
MAIGUA
JAUF
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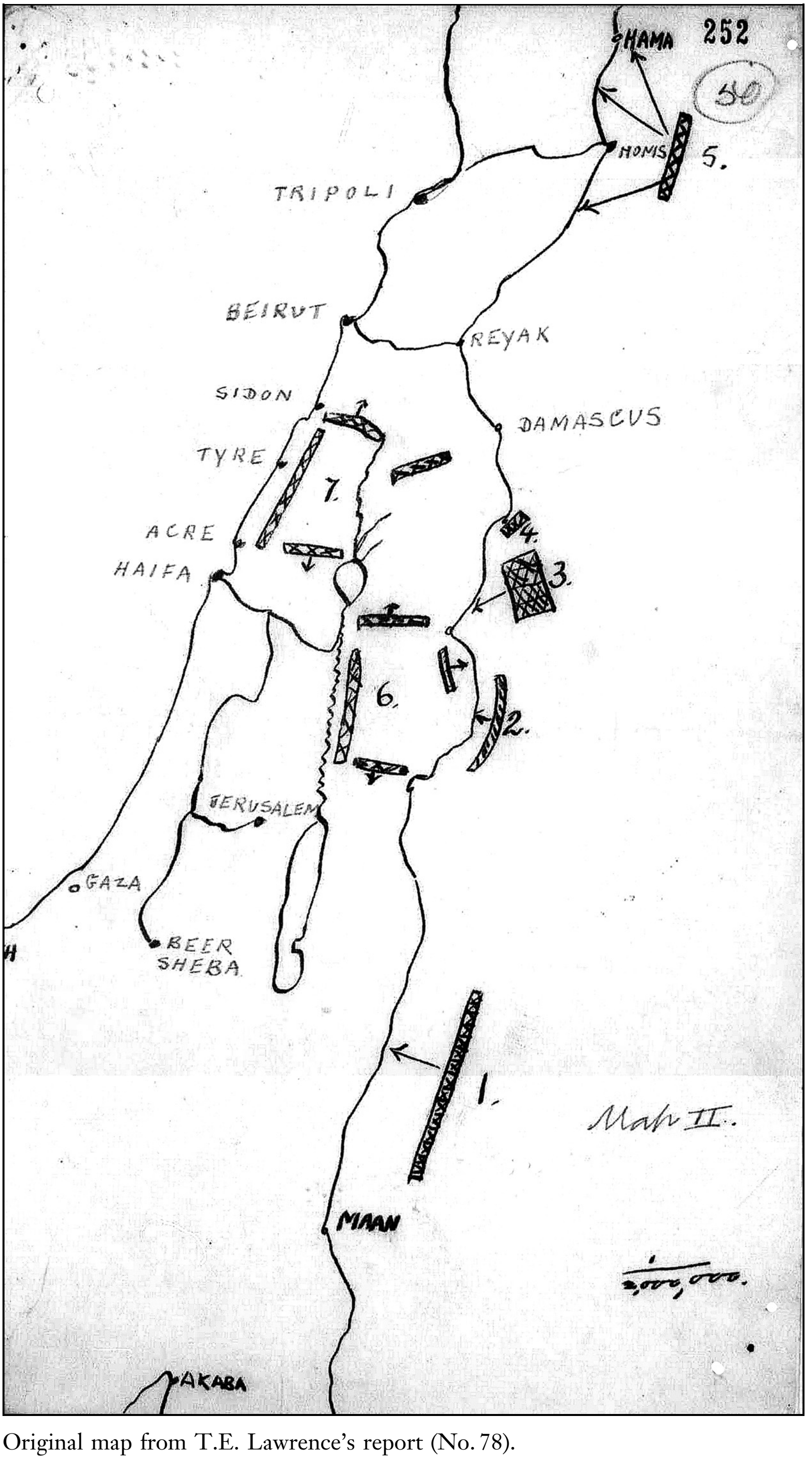
KM. 810
ABU RAA
ROUTE MAP
$\frac{1}{3,000,000}$
WEJH

Original map from T.E. Lawrence's report (No. 78).


252
50
HAMA
HOMS
5.
TRIPOLI
BEIRUT
REYAK
SIDON
DAMASCUS
TYRE
7.
ACRE
4.
HAIFA
3.
6.
2.
JERUSALEM
GAZA
BEER SHEBA
1.
Map II.
MAAN
1/2,000,000.
AKABA

Original map from T.E. Lawrence's report (No. 78).

force 2, if possible, as a preliminary of action, and if Damascus could be taken over by a part of force 3 it would mean a great accession of strength to the Arab cause.

These various operations fortunately need not be accurately concerted. If they took place in numerical order (as in the map) it would be easiest – but there is little hope of things working out just as planned. If they come off the L[ines] of C[ommunication] of the Turkish force in the Jerusalem area would appear threatened – but I do not think the Arabs can be advised to take action unless the E[gyptian] E[xpeditionary] Force can retain the Turks in front of them by a holding attack, to prevent large drafts being sent up to the Hauran. Force 3 is capable of only one effort (lasting perhaps 2 months) and if it is crushed Arab hopes in Syria will depend on the yet untried possibility of action between Homs and Aleppo – on which it is too soon to speak.

Sherif Nasir asked me to discuss with E.E.Force the situation, his needs, and the possibility of joint action by E.E.Force and himself against the Turkish forces in Palestine, as outlined above.

T.E.L.

1. Nasir proved most capable, hard working and straightforward during the expedition. I took a personal liking to him, and think him (after Faisal and Shakir) the best of the Ashraf I have had to work with.
2. My object was to meet the Bishr and compose their feud with the Howeitat with a view to working between Homs and Aleppo. The plan failed, but Dhami is in a position to act as go-between, or to provide men to destroy the Orontes bridges when required. He is now in Akaba – a good man.
3. The effect on the traffic was of course very slight, but the Metowila of Baalbek were most excited, and it was to arouse them that I did it. The noise of dynamite explosions we find everywhere the most effective propagandist measure possible.
4. Ali Riza is the well known Turkish Engineer General, President of the Syrian branch of the Arab Secret Society. He informed me that he had only 500 Turkish gendarmes and three unarmed Labour battalions in Damascus, and was not in a position to demonstrate his real feelings unaided.
5. With Saad Ed Din I discussed a provisional plan of action from the Leja when the need arises.
6. Hussein told me the terms on which the Druses are prepared to rise. They seem to me to offer a basis for negotiation.
7. Their action depends on that of the Druses. I am sure that by himself Nuri would do nothing, but he recognizes the certainty of his being involved in the struggle, and is profoundly pro-Arab and pro-Sherif. He is now collecting his annual corn supply in the Nugra, and is playing double till we require him.

8. Nessib El Bekri is volatile and short-sighted, as are most town-Syrians, and will not carry them out exactly – but no other agent was available.
9. Who was fair spoken, but I am convinced pro-Turk at heart. The Beni Saklhad will mostly follow Trad and Ibn Zebbu, who are our men.
10. The curved rails took 3 days to replace: the repair train then proceeded South, and at km. 174 exploded a very large compound Garland mine, and fell off a 15 foot high culvert into a valley. This caused a further delay of two days while the line was being searched.

Abstract of instructions given to Nessib el Bekri at Kaf on June 18th, 1917

1. Arrange an Intelligence Service with resident agents in Damascus, Deraat and Amman, to collect Military information.
2. Reconcile the Druse leaders to one another.
3. Get into touch with the Druses of Hasbeya and the Lebanon: also with the Metowala of the Jebel Amr and the Belad Bishara (using Sidi Nasir's name), and re-assure the Maronites of the area on the nature of the Sherif's administration in the future.
4. Get in touch with the Ghawarineh of Lake Huleh and Merj Ayum.
5. Send Zeki Effendi to Leja, to examine the roads and water supply.
6. Send me an estimate of the needs of the Druses in warlike stores.
7. Discuss with Nun the elimination of the Circassian colonies of the Nugra and Kuneitra.
8. Approach some of the chief Baalbek Metowila and find out what they are prepared to do.
9. Prepare the villagers of J. El Sheikh, J. El Shergi, and J. Kalamun.
10. Get on speedy terms with the Bishr.

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79. *Clayton to War Office*[1] (11 July 1917)

[...] Capt. Lawrence who was sent northwards to Maan in company with the head Sheikh of the Howeitat, has evidently begun to raises the Tribes in the Maan neighbourhood, as we have definite information from a reliable source that the tribesmen in that neighbourhood are active and are causing considerable anxiety to the enemy. [...] P.S. Since writing the above and just as I send it to the mail, Captain Lawrence has arrived after a journey through enemy country which is little short of marvellous. I attach a rough sketch illustrating his route. He started from Weij on the 9th May with 36 Arabs and marched via Jauf to Nebk (near Kaf) about 140 miles N.E. of Maan) crossing and dynamiting the Hejaz railway en route. There he met Auda Abu Tayi of the Howeitat tribe, whom he left at Nebk with instructions to raise men for a raid in the Maan-Akaba neighbourhood. Lawrence himself then rode on with only two men through very dangerous country to a place near Tadmur where he interviewed Aneizeh Sheikhs. He then struck due west to the railway at Baalbek, a small plate girder bridge in that neighbourhood, and thence down the railway to within 3 miles of Damascus. From Damascus he proceeded S.W. and, after visiting the Druse chiefs at Salkhad, returned to Nebk where he found Abu Tayi had collected his force of tribesmen. On 19th June they moved to Bair (about 60 miles N.E. of Maan). At Bair Lawrence left the Arab force and struck due west across the railway, then turned north and marched west of Amman to Um-Keis, close to the Southern shores of Lake Tiberias, where he inspected the bridges in the Yarmuk valley. Thence he returned to Bair having interviewed various chiefs on the way, destroyed the line in several places and derailed a train. [...] I have not yet been able to discuss his journey with Lawrence as he has only just arrived and is somewhat exhausted by 1,300 miles on a camel in the last 30 days. Moreover, E.E.F. Intelligence have first call on his information. I think, however, that you would be interested in the above brief sketch of a very remarkable performance, calling for a display of courage, resource, and endurance which is conspicuous even in these days when gallant deeds are of daily occurrence. [...]

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[1] Sent from Alexandria to London on 11 July 1917. Unsigned typescript, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/55. The long report, obviously derived from Lawrence's report of the day before (No. 93), illustrated the preparations for Feisal's offensive against the railway to Maan. See also the following No. 85.

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80. *Clayton to Director of Military Intelligence*[1] (11 July 1917)

[...] Captain Lawrence arrived yesterday in Cairo by land from Akaba. He left the Arab Forces in possession of Turkish posts between Tafila, Maan and Akaba, Maan still being occupied by the Turks. Captain Lawrence made a trip from Wadi Sirhan to near Tadmor before beginning operations in the Maan area, and returned by Damascus, Leja, Hauran, Ajlun, Belka, interviewing the Arab and Druse Sheikhs, including Bisha, Wuld Ali, Metowala, beni Hassan, Sakhr, Shaalans, Atraches, Fawaz Ibn Taiz, Mujallis. He damaged the railway at many points between Amman and Batn El Ghul, at Raas Baalbek and near Deraat, and mined a train. After rejoinin the Arab Force under Auda Ibn Tayeh at Bair, Captain Lawrence accompanied it to Akaba. On the way, all the Turkish posts in the triangle Tafila-Maan-Akaba were either captured or destroyed. [...]

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[1] Sent from Cairo on 11 July 1917, unsigned. Stamped 'Secret' at the top centre of the page. Record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/56. The long report, which the Foreign Ministry attributes to Clayton, reported all the news on the Arab army derived from Lawrence's reports.

81. *Wilson to Arab Bureau*[1] (13 July 1917)

Received 16.45
W.1210 13th
Following for High Commissioner, begins: Ref. A.B. 943 and A.B. 949. Recommend strongly that Lawrence be granted D.S.O. immediately for his recent work. He went off with a Sheikh and a Sherif and I am confident that the [words not received] successes gained against trained troops, which should have excellent results on general operations, are due to his personality, gallantry, and grit.

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82. *Wingate to Lawrence*[2] (14 July 1917)

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff has requested me to convey his congratulations on your recent exploit and I do so with the livliest satisfaction. It was a very gallant and successful adventure which it has been my pleasant duty to bring to the notice of the higher authority for special recognition and I sincerely trust this latter will not be long delayed. I hope you are taking a rest and making up some of the arrears of sleep which you must be badly in need of. Yours very sincerely
R.W.

83.*The Howeitat and Their Chiefs*[3] (24 July 1917)

The Howeitat used to be all under Ibn Rashid – a family which still exists in the Akaba in the Hisma, but is grown poor and weak. They were then for a little presided over by Ibn Jazi; and from this period dates their sub-division into discordant sections with independent foreign policies.

The Abu Tayi sub-section is the joint work of Auda, the fighting man, and Mohammed el-Dheilan, the thinker. It fell out with Ibn Jazi over the latter's treatment of a Sherari guest of Auda's, and in the fifteen-year-old feud Annad, Auda's full-grown son was killed. This feud is the greatest of the Sherif's difficulties in the operations lately at Maan and has driven Hamed el-Arar, the 'ibn Jazi' of to-day, into the arms of the Turks, while Saheiman Abu Tiyur and the rest of the sub-tribe are at Wejh with Sidi Feisal. Auda has offered them peace and friendship at the request of Feisal; and it was perhaps the hardest thing the old man has ever had to do. The death of Annad killed all his hopes and ambitions for the Abu Tayi in the desert, and has made his life a bitter failure; but it is a fixed principle of the Sherif that his followers have no blood-feuds, and no Arab enemies, save the Shammar, who are enemies of the Arab. His success in burying the innumerable hatchets of the Hejaz, is the most pregnant indication of his future government. In all Arab minds the Sherif now stands above tribes, the tribal sheikhs and tribal jealousies. His is the dignity of the peacemaker, and the prestige of independent, superposed authority. He does not take sides or declare in their disputes: he mediates, and ensues a settlement.

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[1] Sent from Jeddah on 13 July 1917, to the Arab Bureau in Cairo, stamped 'Secret' at the top centre of the page, unsigned, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/57-53/38. Sent in double copy also to Mark Sykes.

[2] Sent from Cairo, on 14 July 1917, autograph initialled, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/58.

[3] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 57, 24 July 1917. See Chapter XXXVIII of *Seven Pillars*.

The head man of the Abu Tayi is, of course, the inimitable Auda. He must be nearly fifty now (he admits forty) and his black beard is tinged with white, but he is still tall and straight, loosely built, spare and powerful, and as active as a much younger man. His lined and haggard face is pure Bedouin: broad low forehead, high sharp hooked nose, brown-green eyes, slanting outward, large mouth (now unfortunately toothless, for his false teeth were Turkish, and his patriotism made him sacrifice them with a hammer, the day he swore allegiance to Feisal in Wejh), pointed beard and moustache, with the lower jaw shaven clean in the Howeitat style. The Howeitat pride themselves on being altogether Bedu, and Auda is the essence of the Abu Tayi. His hospitality is sweeping (inconvenient, except to very hungry souls), his generosity has reduced him to poverty, and devoured the profits of a hundred successful raids. He has married twenty-eight times, has been wounded thirteen times, and in his battles has seen all his tribesmen hurt, and most of his relations killed. He has only reported his 'kill' since 1900, and they now stand at seventy-five Arabs; Turks are not counted by Auda when they are dead. Under his handling the Toweihah have become the finest fighting force in western Arabia. He raids as often as he can each year ('but a year passes so quickly, Sidi') and has seen Aleppo, Basra, Taif, Wejh and Wadi Dawasir in his armed expeditions.

In his way, Auda is as hard-headed as he is hot-headed. His patience is extreme, and he receives (and ignores) advice, criticism, or abuse with a smile as constant as it is very charming. Nothing on earth would make him change his mind or obey an order or follow a course he disapproved. He sees life as a saga and all events in it are significant and all personages heroic. His mind is packed (and generally overflows) with stories of old raids and epic poems of fights. When he cannot secure a listener he sings to himself in his tremendous voice, which is also deep and musical. In the echoing valleys of Arnousa, our guide in night marches was this wonderful voice of Auda's conversing far in the van, and being rolled back to us from the broken faces of the cliffs. He speaks of himself in the third person, and he is so sure of his fame that he delights to roar out stories against himself. At times he seems seized with a demon of mischief and in large gatherings shouts appalling stories of the private matters of his host or guests: with all this he is modest, simple as a child, direct, honest, kind-hearted, affectionate, and warmly loved even by those to whom he is most trying – his friends.

He is rather like Caesar's tribe, in his faculty for keeping round him a free territory, and then a great ring of enemies. Nuri Shaalan pretends only to love Auda – but in reality he and the Sukhur, and all friendly chiefs also, go about in terror lest they should offend in some way against Auda's pleasure. He loses no opportunity of adding to his enemies and relishes the new situation most because it is an ideal excuse to take on the Turkish government. 'To the Mutessarif of Kerak from Auda abu Tayi … greeting. Take notice to quit Arab territory before the end of Ramadan. We want it for ourselves. Should you not go, I declare you outlawed and God will decide between us.' Such was Auda's cartel to the government the day we struck.

After Auda, Mohammed el-Dheilan is the chief figure in the tribe. He is taller than Auda, and massively built, a square-headed intelligent, thoughtful man of perhaps thirty-five, with a sour humour and a kind heart carefully concealed beneath it. In his youth he was notoriously wild, but reformed himself the night he was condemned to be hanged by Nevris Bey, Sami Pasha's Staff Officer, and has repaid many of the injuries he once wrought. He acted as business manager of the Abu Tayi and their spokesman with the government. His tastes are rather luscious, and his ploughed land at Tafileh and his little house at Maan introduced him to luxuries which took root among the tribe: hence the mineral waters and parasols of a Howeitat Ghazzu. Mohammed is greedy, richer than Auda, more calculating, deeper – but a fine fighting man too, and one who knows how to appeal to everything in his hearers' natures, and to bend them to his will by words.

Zaal ibn Motlog is Auda's nephew. He is about twenty-five, with petite features, carefully curled moustache, polished teeth, trimmed and pointed beard, like a French professional man. He, too, is greedy (of all Arabs I have met the Howeitat were the most open, most constant, most shameless beggars, wearying one day and night with their mean importunities and preposterous demands), sharp as a needle, of no great mental strength, but trained for years by Auda as chief scout to the tribe, and therefore a most capable and dashing commander of a raid.

Auda ibn Zaal is the fourth great man of Abu Tayi. He is silent and more unusual in type than Auda, Mohammed, or Zaal, but the Howeitat flock to his side when there is a raid, and say that in action for concentrated force he is second only to Auda, with something of the skill of Mohammed superadded. Personally I have seen all four chiefs under fire, and saw in them all a headlong unreasoning dash and courage that accounted easily for the scarred and mutilated figures of their tribesmen.

The fighting strength of the Abu Tayi is 535 camel-men and twenty-five horsemen.

84. [*At an interview on July 27th*][1] (28 July 1917)

At an interview on July 27th, 1917, Colonel Wilson discussed with the Sherif the relations of the Hedjaz Government with ibn Saoud and the Idrisi, beginning with an extract from a telegram from the High Commissioner traversing some remarks by Sidi Abdulla on Ibn Saoud's reported intention to come to Mecca for the pilgrimage of 1917.

The Sherif at once disposed of this point, explaining it as an intrigue of Ibn Dakhil's, and said that his relations with Ibn Saoud for many years had been friendly, and he has no intention of giving offence in the manner suggested by Sidi Abdulla.

On the contrary he had invited Abd el Rahman, ibn Saoud's father to come to Mecca for the Haj, and to reconcile with ibn Saoud such fugitives of the Emir family as had taken refuge with him in Mecca. He hopes to hear in a few days that Abd el Rahman is coming.

The Sherif also said that Sidi Abdulla was on the best of terms with Ibn Saoud, and insisted that he went to Shaara in 1914–15 to assist ibn Saoud against ibn Rashid. He also said that Abdulla's presence there had prevented ibn Rashid from following up the victory at Gerab. This is also Sidi Abdulla's present view of his action in that occasion, and it is worth nothing, from Captain Shakespear's reports before the battle, that Abdulla and Ibn Saoud were in direct relation at that time.

Colonel Wilson suggested to the Sherif that it might be desirable to send letters officially to Idrisi and Ibn Saoud, informing them that his assumption of the Royal title was not intended in any way to suggest interference in their internal affairs, and proposing common action against the Turks. He suggested that if Said Mustapha and Turki could come to Mecca as representative of Idrissi and ibn Saoud, the relations of the three rulers could be put on a satisfactory basis.

The Sherif said he did not agree with him. He thought it unwise to raise the question of the inter-relations of the Emirates of Arabia while the Turks were still in possession of the Hedjaz. His future policy towards the other Emirs would be guided, when the leisure came, by the wishes of the British Government. For the present he intends to make no demand, suggestion or protest to them, in any event. He did not believe they could harm him, even if they wanted to, and as for their cooperation with him against the Turks, they all had cause enough against the Turks, and treaties with the British Government, and if that did not move them, he was not going to try.

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[1] Typescript from Jeddah, dated and signed, FO 882/12 KH/17/7 93a (pp. 249–51). Part of a long report by Colonel Wilson to H.C. Wingate, dated Jeddah, 30 July 1917, Secret, Ref. No. 20/I. Lawrence's text was also part of printed report no. 179 sent by Wingate to Balfour and registered as P 4459/1917. The text of this report, like the following Nos 85 to 88, refers to the meeting that Lawrence had for two days (28 and 29 July 1917) with Sherif Hussein, also in the presence of Colonel Wilson who thus writes to Wingate: 'Captain Lawrence who was present wrote the notes at my request.' It was the first time Lawrence had met Hussein in person.

Later he said that Idrisi's promise of neutrality to Muhieddin in Asir had enabled the Turks to operate against the Ben Sakir, who had however repulsed them, and inflicted a loss of 25 killed on them. He said that ibn Saoud's conduct towards ibn Rashid was a disappointment, especially his recent retirement from Northern Kasim. He had asked Salih ibn Athil for the reason for the latter move, and Salih had replied that he was not in a position to explain it.

He mentioned that ibn Saoud had permitted the Turkish military envoys with specie for the Yemen force, to pass through his country on payment of £10,000 and expressed some disgust at the meanness which would break a treaty obligation for so small a bribe. He also said that the ruling family of Kuweit was negroid, and the Mohammerah, as a Persian, was hardly in a position to enter an Arab Confederation. All the Emirs, he said, after the war will be forced willy-nilly to enter into relations with me: as I am much the strongest of them: but I am fully aware that the Mac Mahon agreement, which gave me Syria and Mesopotamia (with the reservation of the British temporary – muwakkat – occupation of Basra and part of Baghdad) stipulates also the territorial integrity and independence of the Emirs already in relations with Great Britain. I will perform my share in this treaty exactly and further will base my future policy in Arabia entirely in accord with the wishes of the British Government. I began my revolt with a view to bringing into harmony the interests of Islam and Great Britain, and I am ready to resign my place at once, if Great Britain wishes it.

The Sherif mentioned later that the Ajman who had turned on ibn Saoud and killed his brother, were now serving Sidi Zeid and Sidi Abdulla. He had no intention of making capital out of them.

We then asked him what his ideas were with regard to ibn Rashid. He promptly said that ibn Rashid was a young fool with no will or policy of his own. The visit of ibn Agil to Abdulla, the defeat of Rashaid ibn Laila by Zeid and the interview between ibn Rimmal and Sherif Nasir were then quoted as possible indications of an early submission of the Shammar to his authority, and he was asked what his attitude towards proposals of peace would be. He replied that when the time came, he would consult with Colonel Wilson and act in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty's Government.

It was evident throughout the interview that the Sherif has no intention at all of adjusting the relations of the Hedjaz Government with the Emirs of Arabia till after the fall of Medina. He said quite frankly that they were not going to do him good or harm at the present, and felt that his position would then be sufficiently improved to give him the advantage in negotiation. He insisted at the same time upon his good personal relations with the various rulers, and seemed to anticipate no difficulty in arriving eventually at an agreement with them, agreeable to the wishes of the British Government.

He conducted his half of the discussion with the some adroitness intentionally misunderstanding awkward points and fighting us off unwelcome subjects with great skill. He was very difficult to "corner" but very charming all the time.

T.E. Lawrence, Captain
Jeddah, 28th July, 1917

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85. *Lawrence to Wilson*[1] (28 July 1917)

Colonel Wilson,

following is abstract of statement by H.M. the King of the Hedjaz at our interview with him on July 27th.

"Abdulla ibn Dakhil, ex officer of Ageyl, on of the Sheiks of Russ, in Kasim, and former envoy from Sidi Faisal to Nuri Shaalan and Ibn Rashid, left Wedj recently and came to Mecca. His leaving Wedj was presumably due to the opposition he had excited amongst the Ageyl by arbitrary disciplinary measures, and deductions from their pay. He had no work to do in Mecca, and no appointment.

"The Sherif some little time afterwards received the letter (copy sent to Cairo) from Sidi Abdulla, which mentioned Ibn Saoud's intention of coming on pilgrimage, and advised that he be forbidden to come. No source was given of the information.

"Immediately after the Sherif received a letter from Sidi Faisal giving the same information and advice. Faisal said however that he had received the information from ibn Dakhil in Mecca, and there is little doubt that Abdulla's informant was the same.

"The story as presented to Faisal was that Ibn Saoud had sent messengers to his agents and friends in Mecca and Jidda, asking them what his chances were if he came to Mecca at the forthcoming pilgrimage season: and that the answers returned were to the effect that he should come, with his men, and that he would find no force in the Southern Hedjaz to interfere in any way with his liberty of action.

"The Sherif, as soon as he received Faisal's letter, sent for Ibn Dakhil and asked for an explanation. Ibn Dakhil said that he sent no such letter to Faisal. The Sherif said that he preferred to take Faisal's word for that, and threw Ibn Dakhil into prison, where he still is."

It would be rather interesting, in this connection, to have a report by Basra on the political feeling at Russ and in Western Kasim. The Ageyl I have spoken to are very lukewarm in their feelings for ibn Saoud, and criticise the Wahabi strictness of public conduct, and the severity of the Sheria law enforced by him. They are mostly Russ men, and I suspect a movement in Western Kasim to cut off from Riadh and come under the Hedjaz administration. This is a pure guess however, and should not be considered unless it can be confirmed by Basra agents.

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[1] Typescript from Jeddah, dated and signed. Record no. FO 882/12 KH/17/7 93a (pp. 252–3).

T.E. Lawrence, Captain
Jeddah, 28.7.17

86. *The Sherif 's Religious Views*[1] (29 July 1917)

On 28 July 1917, the Sherif of Mecca explained at some length to Colonel Wilson before me his dogmatic position. He began by sketching the original tenets of the Wahabi sect – its Puritanism, its literalism and its asceticism. After the Egyptian conquest of Nejd the sect fell away very quickly in numbers and enthusiasm, till of late years it was practically confined to Aridh. The Nomads, Wushm and Qasim had all weakened so much as to be practically Sunni.

About four years ago there was a sudden revival. The Sherif is doubtful as to whether this can be ascribed to Ibn Saud or not. At any rate, funds were obtained from somewhere, and Wahabite missionaries went up to Qasim, amongst the Ateiba, Meteir and Sbei, and into Mecca and Taif. The first tenet of the new preachers was that the orthodox Sunnis and Shias (especially the Shias), were infidels. The Emir of Mecca was as convicted a Kafir as the Turks. The constructive side of the new creed was curious; they preached an exaggerated fatalism: 'God does everything'; they forbade medicine to the sick, discouraged trade, building and forethought. A favourite saying was, 'If a man fall into a well, leave it to God to pull him out.'

The missionaries were at first successful in great part, and the Sherif took alarm at the prospect. He sent Sidi Abdullah rapidly into Nejd, and by a show of force recovered the Atieba, and most of the Meteir, and bound them again to the Emirate of Mecca. He also seems to have taken steps to counter-preach the new dogmas in Qasim itself, and in a short time the second Wahabite movement appeared to have spent itself. It was, however, only dormant, and in the last year or so missionaries have again been issuing from Aridh, and agitating the neighbourhood.

Ibn Saud has increased the unrest by his military policy. He has called out his levies two and three times in the year, discriminating between town and town; from one he will demand a contribution of men; and from another a composition in money. This has particularly annoyed Aneyza, Boreyda and Russ, rich and comfortable towns, fond of silk and tobacco, and not too fond of prayer. Their disaffection is wide, and the Sherif regards it as an embarrassment, since his ambitions extend to the limits of the Ateiba and Meteir only, and he has no desire to be involved in any question of the suzerainty of the Qasim towns. At present there is a sharp cleavage between Aridh and Qasim, which any external encouragement, or unwise internal act, might inflame into an open breach.

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[1] Typescript, signed and dated. Lawrence's text was also part of printed report no. 179 sent by Wingate to Balfour. Record no. IOR/L/ PS/10/645 P 4459/1917. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 59, 12 August 1917. See Chapters V, XIV and LIX of *Seven Pillars*.

We then asked the Sherif about the position of the Shias. Towards the Wahabis, he said, they were extremely hostile. Other than that, he could not see in them any particular policy. They loved his family, since Shias have a greater respect for the person of the Prophet than have the Sunnis. Some such as the Zeidis and Jaafaris were, in his opinion, more reasonable in their attitude than the Shafeis who oppose them. The Hanefite objection to the Shias was political and not doctrinal.

He, in common with all orthodox Islam, was not prepared to deny the Khalifate of Abu Bekr, and regarded the Shias who condemned Abu Bekr, Omar and Othman, as mistaken. The Shias in India are largely heretical in their views, as are many of the Persian sects.

(The Sherif is ostensibly a Shafei. In this conversation he took up a middle position between moderate Shia and Sunni; it is generally believed that his real beliefs are Zeidi. Sidi Abdullah is nearly openly a Shia of the Jaaferi wing; Sidi Ali is a Sunni, and a fairly definite one; Sidi Feisal is not a formalist, and tends to an undefined undogmatic position, more Shia perhaps than Sunni, but vague. They are all nervous of betraying their real attitude, even to their friends, and maintain a noncommittal Shafei profession in public.)

I then mentioned to the Sherif that the Northern Arabs commonly called him Emir el-Muminin, and asked him if this title was correct and if it met with his approval. After a short reflection he said 'No' and made his refusal more definite later. He said that people ascribed to him ambitions which he did not possess; he had even heard talk of his reviving the Khalifate. He explained his position with regard to the Khalifate. It was the simple Shia one (already impressed on me by Feisal and Abdullah), namely, that the Khalifate expired with Abu Bekr, and that any resurrection of the idea to-day was not only grammatically absurd but blasphemous. He will have absolutely no truck with such a notion. (Sidi Abdullah is weaker than his father in this respect. If he saw profit from the Sunni side in the assumption, he might do it, and cut the loss of the Shia element; yet, as matters stand, if the decision lies with him it is improbable that it will ever be adopted.) The idea of a Moslem Khalifate was, said the Sherif, suggested to Abdul Hamid by the British, and exploited by him as a stick to beat us with. Its exponents to-day were

Obeidullah, Abd el-Aziz Shawish, Shekib Arslan, and Assad Shucair, four blackguards without an ounce of Islam or honesty between them, and its nominal holder, the Sultan of the Turks, was a pitiable laughing-stock; the invention had been fatal to Islam; it tried to twist a religion into a political theory and was responsible for unrest in Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, North Africa, Java, India and China. It had plunged Turkey into the present war, and caused the Arab revolt, and with this example before his eyes, and in view of his own policy of friendship with Great Britain, he could neither acknowledge another's Khalifate, assume one himself, or admit the existence of the theory.

The title Emir el-Muminin was one that a sincere Moslem might adopt. It made no pretence to any succession to the prophet, but was objectionable politically, on account of the word 'emir'. It was no use being emir, without the power or pretence of giving orders, not to a sect, or a country or two, but to the Moslem world. The main divisions of Shia and Sunni would unite under this title, but the smaller sects, and especially the alien congregations in India and Africa, would resent the implication of authority, as, no doubt, would the Great Powers.

His policy for Islam was to provide in Mecca and Medina for the honourable upkeep of the Holy Places, to facilitate the pilgrimage, and to issue Fetwas and Sheria decisions as required. The Moslem world must have a head, but it would be a less tempestuous body of thought if the head was the Sherif and Emir of Mecca, basing his right on the concrete possession of the Holy Places, and on an authentic descent, not on a supposed implicit apostolic authority, inherited from an unbroken succession of Khalifas. His motives in rebelling against the Turks were two. The first is a political object; the liberation of the Arab world from Turkish domination; this he will effect without question of creed; Christian, Druse, Shia and Sunni meet on a common base of nationality, and must co-operate with him on level terms if the aim is to be achieved. His second motive was a religious one, purely Islamic in character; it is to provide for the Mohammedan world an independent sovereign, ruling in the Holy Places, of the Sherifian family, whose claims to the spiritual leadership of Islam will be so transcendent as to be generally admitted, but whose weakness in material resources (money, ships, and guns) will at once make him acceptable to the Christian Powers, and purge Islam of the lunatic idea that it is a polity, bound temporally to a single infallible head. His ideal is a spiritual city, not a theocracy. To attain this aim he must have temporalities enough, free of foreign control, to establish his claim to political competence, and must be delivered from the hierarchical theories which have plunged Turkey, the Senussi and Ali Dinar into suicidal jehads. His temporalities he will hold as king of the Arab countries, and his spiritualities as Emir of Mecca.

My personal opinion is that the title of Emir el-Muminin would not be repugnant to him, if it came not as his assumption but as the homage of his followers. It is generally used by the tribes to-day from Kaf to Kunfida, and will apparently be acceptable to the sheikhs of urban Syria. His present objection, that it involves the power of command in Islam, does not hold good, since it is as fair to interpret it only in a doctrinal sense.

As for the Khalifate, the sincere disgust he expressed of Abdul Hamid's bogus claims, and his only half-veiled acknowledgement of Shia tenets himself, made me certain that this opposition to the idea is a matter of principle. Further, I do not think that all the temptations of the world would persuade Sherif Hussein to run counter to his principles. His transparent honesty and strength of conviction (while they may prevent him distinguishing between his prejudices and his principles) will at all costs ensure his shaping his conduct exactly in accordance with his promised word. It would be easy to influence him in coming to a decision, but once his mind is made up it would be a thankless task to try and make him change it.

He appears to hope that, by ignoring the political disintegration of Islam, he may be able to concentrate attention on its dogmatic differences and do something to reduce the friction between sects. His appeal would be to moderate Sunni and moderate Shia to meet together under his presidency, and try to restrain the extremists in their camps.

T.E. Lawrence, *Captain*
Jeddah, the 29th July 1917

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87. [*On July 29th the Sherif*][1] (30 July 1917)

On July 29th the Sherif sent a message asking me to come and see him and in the course of a long private conversation he gave me his views of the Sykes-Picot Mission. The main points were that he had altogether refused to permit any French annexation of Beyrout and the Lebanon. "They are Arab countries, but I will neither take them myself nor permit any one else to take them. They have deserved independence, and it is my duty to see they get it."

He said that he refused a detailed discussion on boundaries, on the grounds that hostilities between Turkey and the Allies still continue and all decisions taken now would necessarily have to be modified in accordance with the actual results of military operations, for which he must have an absolutely free hand. "If advisable we will pursue the Turks to Constantinople and Erzeroum – so why talk about Beyrout, Aleppo and Hail?"

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[1] Typescript, signed and dated. Like the previous one, it was attached to report no. 179 by Wingate to Balfour. Record no. FO 882/12 KH/17/17 (p. 262); a copy is also present in IOR /L PS 10/645 P4459/1917. Also mentioned in the brochure *Memorandum on British Commitments to King Hussein*, Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, Special 3, registered as War Cabinet E.C. 220, pp. 6–8.

He is extremely please to have trapped M. Picot into the admission that France will be satisfied in Syria with the position Great Britain desires in Iraq. That, he says, means a temporary occupation of the country for strategical and political reasons (with probably an annual grant to the Sherif in compensation and recognition) and concessions in the way of public works. "I was ready without being asked to guard their interests in the existing railways, and assist their schools: but Hedjaz and Syria are like the palm and fingers of one hand, and I could not have consented to the amputation of any finger or part of a finger without leaving myself a cripple."

In conclusion, the Sherif remarked on the shortness and informality of conversations, the absence of written documents, and the fact that the only change in the situation caused by the meeting was the French renunciation of the ideas of annexation, permanent occupation or suzerainty of any part of Syria – "but this we did not embody in a formal treaty, as the war is not finished. I merely read out my acceptance of the formula '*as the British in Iraq*' proposed to me by M. Picot, since Sir Mark Sykes assured me that it would put a satisfactory conclusion to the discussion."

T.E. Lawrence, *Captain*
Jeddah, the 30th July 1917

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88. [*The Sherif and His Neighbours*][1] (End of July, 1917)

In Bulletin No. 58 we referred to an interview which Colonel Wilson had with the Sherif on the subject of the latter's relations with Ibn Saud and the Idrisi. We have now received from him a detailed account of this interview, written by Captain Lawrence, who was present. The Sherif, after explaining the misunderstanding caused by Ibn Dakhil, said that his relations with Ibn Saud for many years had been friendly, and he had no intention of giving offence in the manner suggested by Sidi Abdullah.

On the contrary, he had invited Abd el-Rahman, Ibn Saud's father, to come to Mecca for the Haj, and to reconcile with Ibn Saud such fugitives of the emir's family as had taken refuge with him in Mecca. He hopes to hear in a few days that Abd el-Rahman is coming.

The Sherif also said that Sidi Abdullah was on the best of terms with Ibn Saud, and insisted that he went to Shaara in 1914–15 to assist Ibn Saud against Ibn Rashid. He also said that Abdullah's presence there had prevented Ibn Rashid from following up the victory at Jerab. This is also Sidi Abdullah's present view of his action on that occasion, and it is worth noting, from

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 60, 20 August 1917. Concordantly attributed to Lawrence, based on the edition edited by his brother Arnold. See the precedent which suggests the real dating of the original report with respect to its printing in the *Arab Bulletin*.

Captain Shakespeare's reports before the battle (*Arab Bulletin*, 1916, p. 336), that Abdullah and Ibn Saud were in direct relation at that time.

Colonel Wilson suggested to the Sherif that it might be desirable to send letters officially to Idrisi and Ibn Saud, informing them that his assumption of the royal title was not intended in any way to suggest interference with their internal affairs, and proposing common action against the Turks. He suggested that if Said Mustafa and Turki could come to Mecca as representatives of Idrisi and Ibn Saud, the relations of the three rulers could be put on a satisfactory basis.

The Sherif said he did not agree with him. He thought it unwise to raise the question of the inter-relations of the Emirates of Arabia while the Turks were still in possession of the Hejaz. His future policy towards the other emirs would be guided, when the time came, by the wishes of the British government. For the present he intends to make no demand, suggestion, or protest to them, in any event. He did not believe they could harm him, even if they wanted to, and as for their co-operation with him against the Turks, they all had cause enough against the Turks, and treaties with the British government, and if that did not move them, he was not going to try.

Later he said that Idrisi's promise of neutrality to Muhieddin in Asir had enabled the Turks to operate against the Beni Shihir, who had however repulsed them and inflicted a loss of twenty-five killed on them. He said that Ibn Saud's conduct towards Ibn Rashid was a disappointment, especially his recent retirement from northern Qasim. He had asked Salih ibn Athil for the reason for the latter move, and Salih had replied that he was not in a position to explain it.

He mentioned that Ibn Saud had permitted the Turkish military envoys, with specie for the Yemen force, to pass through his country, on payment of £10,000, and expressed some disgust at the meanness which would break a treaty obligation for so small a bribe. He also said that the ruling family of Koweit was negroid, and that Mohammerah, as Persian, was hardly in a position to enter an Arab confederation.

The Sherif mentioned later that the Ajman who had turned on Ibn Saud and killed his brother were now serving Sidi Zeid and Sidi Abdullah. He had no intention of making capital out of them; but he hoped, through Abd el-Rahman, to persuade Ibn Saud to make peace with them.

When asked what his ideas were with regard to Ibn Rashid, he promptly said that Ibn Rashid was a young fool with no will or policy of his own. The visit of Ibn Ajil to Abdullah, the defeat of Rashaid Ibn Leila by Zeid, and the interview between Ibn Rimmal and Sherif Nasir were then quoted as possible indications of an early submission of the Shammar to his authority, and he was asked what his attitude towards proposals of peace would be. He replied that when the time came, he would consult with Colonel Wilson and act in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty's government.

It was evident throughout the interview that the Sherif has no intention at all of adjusting the relations of the Hejaz government with the emirs of Arabia until after the fall of Medina. He said quite frankly that they were not going to do him good or harm at present, and felt that his position would then by sufficiently improved to give him the advantage in negotiation. He insisted at the same time upon his good personal relations with the various rulers, and seemed to anticipate no difficulty in arriving eventually at an agreement with them, agreeable to the wishes of the British government.

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89. *The Occupation of Akaba*[1] (First days of August 1917)

By Monday, 18 June, we had enrolled 535 Toweiha (of whom twenty-five were horsemen), about 150 Rualla (under Benaiah ibn Dughmi, Durzi's brother) and Sherarat (under Geraitan el-Azmi), and thirty-five Kawachiba, under Dhami. Of these we chose nearly 200, and left them as guards for the tribal tents in Wadi Sirhan. With the rest we marched out of Kaf in the afternoon, and on 20 June entered Bair, after an easy but waterless march over the Suwan. At Bair we found one well filled in, two seriously damaged, and a fourth unhurt: the Turks had come there a little time before with Hamd el-Arar, and tried to blow them in with gelignite. They used an electric exploder clumsily, and we removed many tamped charges from the sides of the still open wells.

Circumstances forced us to stay in Bair till Thursday, 28 June. The time was spent in negotiations with Ibn Jazi and the smaller sub-sections of the Howeitat on the Akaba road. We also carried out demolitions against the railway at Atwi, Sultani, Minifir, and elsewhere. The Ageyl dynamitards were inefficient, and our supply of dynamite small, so that the demolitions were of a pin-prick character, meant only to distract the Turks, and advertise our coming to the Arabs. The staffs of two stations were killed, to the same intent.

From Bair we marched to El-Jefer, where we stayed till 1 July. The Turks had been more successful in their efforts against the wells here, and we had some difficulty in digging one out. The water proved sufficient for about

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[1] Original typescript, unsigned, with the handwritten (not Lawrence's) indication 'filed 7.8.17'. Probably written in Suez (see *Seven Pillars*, Chapter LVI). Record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/68. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 59, 12 August 1917 with some variations. Preceded by the indication: 'The following account by Captain Lawrence supplements information already given on pages 307–308 above [the reference is to no. 89 of 28 May 1917 included here, although the page numbering is wrong: it is actually p. 304 of the *Arab Bulletin*]. The irregularity of the Hejaz mail service is responsible for the delay in its publication.' Here I have followed the original typescript. See Chapter LIV of *Seven Pillars*.

300 men and camels, when it was obtained. The station buildings of Maan and Hamra are visible from El-Jefer, about twenty-four miles off, but the Turks did not realise that we had arrived in force, owing to the operations near Amman, undertaken at this time by a flying column of 100 men, under Sheikh Zaal. This led them to believe us still in Wadi Sirhan, and on the 30th they sent a force of 400 cavalry with four machine-guns, and Nawaf ibn Shaalan as guide, from Deraa to go to Kaf and find us. The Turks seem unable to discriminate the true from the false, out of the flood of news unquestionably brought them by the local Arabs.

From El-Jefer a flying column rode to Fuweilah, about seventeen miles south-west of Maan, and in concert with the Dhumaniya Howeitat (Shiekh Gasim) attacked the gendarme post on the motor road to Akaba. In the fighting some mounted gendarmes got into a group of undefended Howeitat tents, and stabbed to death an old man, six women and seven children, the only occupants. Our Arabs in consequence wiped out the post, but not before some had escaped to Maan.

This news reached Maan at dawn on the 1st and a battalion of the 178th Regiment which had arrived at Maan from Zunguldak on the day before, was immediately ordered out to Fuweilah to relieve the post. The same afternoon we descended on the line at kilometre 479, near Ghadir el Haj, and carried out extensive demolitions till nearly sunset, when we marched westward, intending to sleep at Batra. On the way, however, we were met by messengers from our Fuweilah column, reporting the coming of new troops from Maan, and we swung northwards, marching a great part of the night, till we were able at dawn to occupy the crests of the low rolling grass-covered hills that flank each side of the Akaba road near Ain Aba el-Lissan. The Turks had reached Fuweilah, to find only vultures in possession, and moved to Aba el-Lissan, fourteen miles from Maan, for the night. The spring has been built round, and piped, and is much smaller than it used to be before the war, but is still sufficient for perhaps 2,000 men and animals. The battalion camped next the water, and kept together in the bottom of the valley, so that we were able to take the higher ground (at from 400 to 600 yards range) without difficulty.

We sat here throughout 2 July, sniping the Turks steadily all day, and inflicted some loss. The Turks replied with shrapnel from a mountain-gun, firing twenty rounds, which were all they had. The shells grazed our hilltops, and burst far away over the valleys behind. When sunset came, Auda Abu Tayi collected the fifty horsemen now with us, in a hollow valley about 200 yards from the Turks, but under cover, and suddenly charged at a wild gallop into the brown of them, shooting furiously from the saddle as he came. The unexpectedness of the move seemed to strike panic into the Turks (about 550 strong), and after a burst of rifle fire, they scattered in all directions. This was our signal, and all the rest of our force (perhaps 350 men, for some were watching the road on the east) dashed down the hillsides into the hollow, as fast as the camels would go. The Turks were all infantry, and the Arabs all mounted, and the mix-up round the spring in the dusk, with 1,000 men shooting like mad, was considerable. As the Turks scattered, their position at once became hopeless, and in five minutes it was merely a massacre. In all I counted 300 enemy dead in the main position, and a few fugitives may have been killed further away, though the majority of our men went straight for the Turkish camp to plunder it, before the last shots were fired. The prisoners came to 160 (three officers) mostly taken by Sherif Nasir and myself, since the Arabs in the Maan area are very bitter against the Turks, and are set on killing all they can. They have some reason for this attitude, in the slaughter of the women and children mentioned above, and in the previous execution of Sheikh Abd el-Rahman, a Belgawiya from Kerak. He was popular, and anti-Turk, but the government caught him and harnessing him between four wild mules tore him to death. This was the culmination of a series of executions by torture in Kerak, and the memory of them has embittered local opinion.

The Arab losses in the fight came to two killed (a Rualla and a Sherarat) and several wounded, including Sheikh Benaiah ibn Dughmi. Considering the amount of firing, the confusion, the close quarters at which we were, and the Turkish casualties, the Arabs must be held to have got off very luckily. Several horses were hit in the cavalry charge and Auda himself (in front, of course) had a narrow escape, since two bullets smashed his field glasses, one pierced his revolver holster, three struck his sheathed sword, and his horse was killed under him. He was wildly pleased with the whole affair.

Unfortunately, many of our prisoners were wounded and we had very few spare camels with us. Those who could hold on were mounted behind Arabs on the spare camels; but we had to abandon the worst cases at Aba el-Lissan, and of those we took with us about fifty died of heat, hunger and thirst on the road down to Akaba. The heat in the Hesma and Wadi Itm was terrible, and the water between Fuweilah and Akaba only sufficient for perhaps 200 men and animals. For the matter of food, Nasir and I had taken two months' supply with us from Wejh, and were now two months out; the Bedu had their own food with them in their saddle bags, but Arab rations are ill-adapted, in quality and quantity, for Turkish soldiers. We did what we could for the prisoners, but everybody went short.

From Aba el-Lissan we marched to Guweira (22 miles) after sending out a column which destroyed Mreiga, the nearest gendarme post to Maan, on the Akaba road. At Guweira we received the surrender of the garrison (of about 120 men), their intermediary being Hussein ibn Jad, who joined us here on 4 July. The motor road is finished to the foot of Nagb el-Star, from Maan, but not metalled anywhere. As the soil is fairly hard loam, I think it should suffice for the passage of a series of light cars. The Nagb is very steep, with bad hairpin corners, and will require improvement. The Hesma is of fine red sand, soft along the track, but harder in the bed of the water-course which runs down from the foot of the Bagb to Guweira. From Guweira we marched down Wadi Itm to Kethira (18 miles) where we overran a Turkish post of about seventy infantry and mounted men, taking most of them prisoners, and thence we went on to near Khadra, at the old stone dam in Wadi Itm (15 miles), where we came into contact with the garrison (300 men) of Akaba. They had retired from the village itself (about six miles away) to be out of view of the sea, and on the line of retreat towards Maan. The news of our fight at Fuweilah had reached Akaba quickly, and all the Amran, Darausha, Heiwat and sub-tribes of the Howeitat near Akaba had risen, and collected round the Khadra post, which had held them at bay from their trenches with small casualties for two days. When Nasir and the banner turned up the Arab excitement became intense, and preparations were made for an immediate assault. This did not fall in with our ideas, since (pour encourager les autres) we wanted the news to get about that the Arabs accepted prisoners. All the Turks we met were most happy to surrender, holding up their arms and crying 'Muslim, Muslim' as soon as they saw us. They expressed themselves willing and anxious to go on fighting foreigners and Christians till they dropped, but with no intention of adding a Moslem enemy to the powers already against them. To save the Khadra garrison from massacre Sherif Nasir had to labour from afternoon till dawn, but he eventually carried his point (by our going ourselves between the Arab and the Turkish lines, to break their field of fire), and with the prisoners (now about 600 in number) we marched into Akaba on the morning of 6 July. The astonishment of a German NCO (well-boring at Khadra) when the Sherif's force appeared was comic. He knew neither Arabic nor Turkish, and had not been aware of the Arab revolt.

The situation at Akaba was now rather serious, economically. We had no food, 600 prisoners and many visitors in prospect. Meat was plentiful, since we had been killing riding camels as required, and there were unripe dates in the palm-groves. These saved the day, but involved a good deal of discomfort after the eating, and the force in Akaba was very unhappy till the arrival of HMS Dufferin on the 13th with food from Suez. Before she arrived, Arab forces were sent northward to occupy the hills up to Wadi Musa (Petra), some sixty miles from Akaba, and southward to join up with the Beni Atiyeh, and reconnoitre the country with a view to an eventual offensive against the railway south of Maan.[1]

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[1] See the brochure *Summary of the Hejaz Revolt*, by General Staff, War Office, London, 31 August 1918, record no. IOR/L/MIL/17/16/13. '[...] 6. Meanwhile Akaba had been captured on the 6th July by a Sherifial force, accompanied by Lawrence,§ and Sherif Feisal

90. *Twenty-seven articles*[1] (Before 20 August 1917)

Dear K.C.

This is not bad stuff … in the absence of F[eisal]. Please chuck it into Bulletin, if you approve. TEL

The following notes have been expressed in commandment form for greater clarity and to save words. They are however only my personal conclusions, arrived at gradually while I worked in the Hejaz and now put on paper as stalking horses for beginners in the Arab armies. They are meant to apply only to Bedu; townspeople or Syrians require totally different treatment. They are of course not suitable to any other person's need, or applicable unchanged in any particular situation. Handling Hejaz Arabs is an art, not a science, with exceptions and no obvious rules. At the same time we have a great chance there; the Sherif trusts us, and has given us the position (towards his Government) which the Germans wanted to win in Turkey. If we are tactful, we can at once retain his good will and carry out our job, but to succeed we have got to put into it all the interest and skill we possess.

1. Go easy just for the first few weeks. A bad start is difficult to atone for, and the Arabs form their judgements on externals that we ignore. When you have reached the inner circle in a tribe, you can do as you please with yourself and them.

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moved there in July, 1917, thus enabling operations and propaganda to be extended much farther to the north. […].

§ Captain Lawrence left Wejh on the 9th May, 1917, with a few men and Sherif Nasir, with the intention of visiting some of the Northern Hejaz tribes, and, if possible to open Akaba for use as a supply base for the Arab forces. His route lay to Jauf to see Nuri Shaalan, but on hearing he was north Lawrence proceeded to Nebk, near Qaf, where he met Auda Abu Tayi of the Howeitata. Sherif Nasir remained in Qaf to enrol Rualla, Sherarat and Howeitat for the Akaba Expedition, while Lawrence proceeded north to near Tadmur and thence west to Baalbek, where he blew up a small railway bridge, and thence south to within 3 miles of Damascus, thence to Salkhad in the Druse country and from there to Azrak, where he saw Nuri Shaalan and his son, Nawwaf. About the end of June, Lawrence rejoined Nasir, and on the 30th they moved to El Jefer, east of Maan, thence to Km. 479, where the railway was destroyed on a large scale. They then marched to Fuweilah on the Maan-Akaba road, where the gendarme post had been destroyed by an advance column, but had been reoccupied by the 4/178th Regiment from Maan. They secured the practical annihilation of the battalion at Aba lissan on the 2nd July, taking prisoner the Officer Commanding, 160 men, then marched on El Kethira, wiping out a post of 3 officers and 140 men, thence to El Khadra, north of Wadi Ithm. The party entered Akaba on the 6th July, 1917, with 600 prisoners, about 20 officers and a German non-commissioned officer, having killed some 700 Turks. Lawrence's journey was all the more remarkable for the fact that during the whole time his head was worth to any enterprising Arab the sum of £T.5,000.'

[1] Autograph manuscript, unsigned, dated by someone else 'August 1917', record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/74. Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 60, 20 August 1917. Here I have followed the original manuscript. See Chapters XXXVII and LXXIV of *Seven Pillars*.

2. Lean all you can about your Ashraf and Bedu. Get to know their families, clans and tribes, friends and enemies, wells, hills and roads. Do all this by listening and by indirect inquiry. Do not ask questions. Get to speak their dialect of Arabic, not yours. Until you can understand their allusions, avoid getting deep into conversation, or you will drop bricks. Be a little stiff at first.

3. In matters of business deal only with the commander of the army, column, or party in which you serve. Never give orders to anyone at all, and reserve your directions or advice for the C.O., however great the temptation (for efficiency's sake) of dealing direct with his underlings. Your place is advisory, and your advice is due to the commander alone. Let him see that this is your conception of your duty, and that his is to be the sole executive of your joint plans.

4. Win and keep the confidence of your leader. Strengthen his prestige at your expense before others when you can. Never refuse or quash schemes he may put forward; but ensure that they are put forward in the first instance privately to you. Always approve them, and after praise modify them insensibly, causing the suggestions to come from him, until they are in accord with your own opinion. When you attain this point, hold him to it, keep a tight grip of his ideas, and push him forward as firmly as possibly, but secretly, so that no one but himself (and he not too clearly) is aware of your pressure.

5. Remain in touch with your leader as constantly and unobtrusively as you can. Live with him, that at meal times and at audiences you may be naturally with him in his tent. Formal visits to give advice are not so good as the constant dropping of ideas in casual talk. When stranger sheikhs come in for the first time to swear allegiance and offer service, clear out of the tent. If their first impression is of foreigners in the confidence of the Sherif, it will do the Arab cause much harm.

6. Be shy of too close relations with the subordinates of the expedition. Continual intercourse with them will make it impossible for you to avoid going behind or beyond the instructions that the Arab CO has given them on your advice, and in so disclosing the weakness of his position you altogether destroy your own.

7. Treat the sub-chiefs of your force quite easily and lightly. In this way you hold yourself above their level. Treat the leader, if a Sherif, with respect. He will return your manner and you and he will then be alike, and above the rest. Precedence is a serious matter among the Arabs, and you must attain it.

8. Your ideal position is when you are present and not noticed. Do not be too intimate, too prominent, or too earnest. Avoid being identified too long or too often with any tribal sheikh, even if C.O. of the expedition. To do your work you must be above jealousies, and you lose prestige if you are associated with a tribe or clan, and its inevitable feuds. Sherifs are above all blood-feuds and local rivalries, and form the only [erased here: unifying] principle of unity

among the Arabs. Let your name therefore be coupled always with a Sherifs, and share his attitude towards the tribes. When the moment comes for action put yourself publicly under his orders. The Bedu will then follow suit.

9. Magnify and develop the growing conception of the Sherifs as the natural aristocracy of the Arabs. Inter-tribal jealousies make it impossible for any sheikh to attain a commanding position, and the only hope of union in Nomad Arabia is that the Ashraf be universally acknowledged as the ruling class. Sherifs are half-townsmen, half-nomad, in manner and life, and have the instinct of command. Mere merit and money would be insufficient to obtain such recognition; but the Arab reverence for pedigree and the Prophet gives hope for the ultimate success of the Ashraf.

10. Call your Sherif "Sidi" in public and in private. Call other people by their ordinary names, without title. In intimate conversation call a Sheikh "Abu Annad", "Akhu Alia" or some similar by-name.

11. The foreigner and Christian is not a popular person in Arabia. However friendly and informal the treatment of yourself may be, remember always that your foundations are very sandy ones. Wave a Sherif in front of you like a banner and hide your own mind and person. If you succeed, you will have hundreds of miles of country and thousands of men under your orders, and for this it is worth bartering the outward show.

12. Cling tight to your sense of humour. You will need it every day. A dry irony is the most useful type, and repartee of a personal and not too broad character will double your influence with the chiefs. Reproof, if wrapped up in some smiling form, will carry further and last longer than the most violent speech. The power of mimicry or parody is valuable, but use it sparingly, for wit is more dignified than humour. Do not cause a laugh at a Sherif except amongst Sherifs.

13. Never lay hands on an Arab; you degrade yourself. You may think the resultant obvious increase of outward respect a gain to you; but [erased here: all that] what you have really done is to build a wall between you and their inner selves. It is difficult to keep quiet when everything is being done wrong, but the less you lose your temper the greater your advantage. Also then you will not go mad yourself.

14. While very difficult to drive, the Bedu are easy to lead, if you have the patience to bear with them. The less apparent your interferences the more your influence. They are willing to follow your advice and do what you wish, but they do not mean you or anyone else to be aware of that. It is only after the end of all annoyances that you find at bottom their real fund of goodwill.

15. Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.

16. If you can, without being too lavish, forestall presents to yourself. A well-placed gift is often more effective in winning over a suspicious sheikh. Never receive a present without giving a liberal return, but you may delay this return (while letting its ultimate certainty be known) if you require a particular service from the giver. Do not let them ask you for things, since their greed will then make them look upon you only as a cow to milk.

17. Wear an Arab headcloth when with a tribe. Bedu have a malignant prejudice against the hat, and believe that our persistence in wearing it (due probably to British obstinacy of dictation) is founded on some immoral or irreligious principle. A thick headcloth forms a good protection against the sun, and if you wear a hat your best Arab friends will be ashamed of you in public.

18. Disguise is not advisable. Except in special areas, let it be clearly known that you are a British officer and a Christian. At the same time, if you can wear Arab kit when with the tribes, you will acquire their trust and intimacy to a degree impossible in uniform. It is, however, dangerous and difficult. They make no special allowances for you when you dress like them. Breaches of etiquette not charged against a foreigner are not condoned to you in Arab clothes. You will be like an actor in a foreign theatre, playing a part day and night for months, without rest, and for an anxious stake. Complete success, which is when the Arabs forget your strangeness and speak naturally before you, counting you as one of themselves, is perhaps only attainable in character: while half-success (all that most of us will strive for; the other costs too much) is easier to win in British things, and you yourself will last longer, physically and mentally, in the comfort that they mean. Also then the Turks will not hang you, when you are caught.

19. If you wear Arab things, wear the best. Clothes are significant among the tribes, and you must wear the appropriate, and appear at ease in them. Dress like a Sherif, if they agree to it.

20. If you wear Arab things at all, go the whole way. Leave your English friends and customs on the coast, and fall back on Arab habits entirely. It is possible, starting thus level with them, for the European to beat the Arabs at their own game, for we have stronger motives for our action, and put more heart into it than they. If you can surpass them, you have taken an immense stride toward complete success, but the strain of living and thinking in a foreign and half-understood language, the savage food, strange clothes, and stranger ways, with the complete loss of privacy and quiet, and the impossibility of ever relaxing your watchful imitation of [erased here: your companion] the others for months on end, provide such an added stress to the ordinary difficulties of dealing with the Bedu, the climate, and the Turks, that this road should not be chosen without serious thought.

21. Religious discussions will be frequent. Say what you like about your own side, and avoid criticism of theirs, unless you know that the point is external, when you may score heavily by proving it so. With the Bedu, Islam is so all-pervading an element that there is little religiosity, little fervour, and no regard for externals. Do not think from their conduct that they are careless. Their conviction of the truth of their faith, and its [erased here: part] share in every act and thought and principle of their daily life is so intimate and intense as to be unconscious, unless roused by opposition. Their religion is as much a part of nature to them as is sleep or food.

22. Do not try to trade on what you know of fighting. The Hejaz confounds ordinary tactics. Learn the Bedu principles of war as thoroughly and as quickly as you can, for till you know them your advice will be no good to the Sherif. Unnumbered generations of tribal raids have taught them more about some parts of the business than we will ever know. In familiar conditions they fight well, but strange events cause panic. Keep your unit small. Their raiding parties are usually from one hundred to two hundred men, and if you take a crowd they only get confused. Also their sheikhs, while admirable company commanders, are too 'set' to learn to handle the equivalents of battalions or regiments. Don't attempt unusual things, unless they appeal to the sporting instinct Bedu have so strongly, or unless success is obvious. If the objective is a good one (booty) they will attack like fiends, they are splendid scouts, their mobility gives you the advantage that will win this local war, they make proper use of their knowledge of the country (don't take tribesmen to places they do not know), and the gazelle-hunters, who form a proportion of the better men, are great shots at visible targets. A sheikh from one tribe cannot give orders to men from another; a Sherif is necessary to command a mixed tribal force. If there is plunder in prospect, and the odds are at all equal, you will win. Do not waste Bedu attacking trenches (they will not stand casualties) or in trying to defend a position, for they cannot sit still without slacking. The more unorthodox and Arab your proceedings, the more likely you are to have the Turks cold, for they lack initiative and expect you to. Don't play for safety.

23. The open reason that Bedu give you for action or inaction may be true, but always there will be better reasons left for you to divine. You must find these inner reasons (they will be denied, but are none the less in operation) before shaping your arguments for one course or other. Allusion is more effective than logical exposition: they dislike concise expression. Their minds work just as ours do, but on different premises. There is nothing unreasonable, incomprehensible, or inscrutable in the Arab. Experience of them, and knowledge of their prejudices will enable you to foresee their attitude and possible course of action in nearly every case.

24. Do not mix Bedu and Syrians, or trained men and tribesmen. You will get work out of neither, for they hate each other. I have never seen a successful combined operation, but many failures. In particular, ex-officers of the Turkish army, however Arab in feelings and blood and language, are hopeless with Bedu. They are narrow-minded in tactics, unable to adjust themselves to irregular warfare, clumsy in Arab etiquette, swollen-headed to the extent of being incapable of politeness to a tribesman for more than a few minutes, impatient, and, usually, helpless without on the road and in action. Your orders (if you were unwise enough to give any) would be more readily obeyed by Beduins than those of any Mohammedan Syrian officer. Arab townsmen and Arab tribesmen regard each other mutually as poor relations – and poor relations are much more objectionable than poor strangers.

25. In spite of ordinary Arab example, avoid too free talk about women. It is as difficult a subject as religion, and their standards are so unlike our own that a [erased here: harmless] remark harmless in English, may appear as unrestrained to them, as some of their statements would look to us, if translated literally.

26. Be as careful of your servants as of yourself. If you want a sophisticated one you will probably have to take an Egyptian, or a Sudani, and unless you are very lucky he will undo on trek [erased here: most] much of the good you so laboriously effect. Arabs will cook rice and make coffee for you, and leave you if required to do unmanly work like cleaning boots or washing. They are only really possible if you are in Arab kit. A slave brought up in the Hejaz is the best servant, but there are rules against British subjects owning them, so they have to be lent to you. In any case, take with you an Ageyli or two when you go up-country. They are the most efficient couriers in Arabia, and understand camels.

27. The beginning and ending of the secret of handling Arabs is unremitting study of them. Keep always on your guard; never say an unnecessary thing: watch yourself and your companions all the time: hear all that passes, search out what is going on beneath the surface, read their characters, discover their tastes and their weaknesses, and keep everything you find out to yourself. Bury yourself in Arab circles, have no interests and no ideas except the work in hand, so that your brain is saturated with one thing only, and you realise your part deeply enough to avoid the little slips that would counteract the painful work of weeks. Your success will be proportioned to the amount of mental effort you devote to it.

91. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (After 21 August 1917)

General Clayton,
please excuse the ink: I'm writing under difficulties.

When we reached Akaba on Aug. 17, I found that one caravan of bombs had already gone to Kuntilla, and a second was just leaving. I arranged with Sherif Nasir to send the balance next day, and on the 21st I went out. Ten Ageyl, under Shawish Daoud are holding the police post there pending the arrival of the aeroplanes.

On the way to Kuntilla we met 14 parties of Beduins from both sides of the old Turk-Egyptian border, coming in to Akaba to salute Sherif Nasir. I think it all points to a decided move of Sinai opinion towards the Sherif, and away from the Turks. Nasir and Feisul are trying to persuade them that their new orientation involves friendship with the British. The Arabs seem rather prejudiced however.

Please tell Captain G. Lloyd that Jeddua ibn Sufi is being sounded in the sense agreed upon between us.

Sergt. "Lewis" and Corporal "Stokes" are doing most excellent work training their Beduin in gun and machine gun work. I think the results will be very good. Would you please inform Major Hulton (O.B. G.H.Q.) that I wish to keep them a little longer since the training is not complete.

There is no news from the Guwaira area. A Turkish cavalry patrol visited Delagha, but was driven out with some loss by the Bedu, who have recently sent 40 captured mules here. I should not be astonished by a Turk occupation of Delagha, with a raid towards Gharandel, to cut us off from W. Musa.

Jafaar pasha is taking over Akaba defence, which involves the maintenance of ports at Guwaira, and Gharandel, Ghadian, etc. This sets free the Abu Tayi for extended raiding.

Please tell Major Lefroy that the receiving set picks up Cairo easily, using the raised aerial. The ground aerial is not acute enough. The Humber also picks up his messages to me. As his code is much safer than any naval cipher, I would like disguised Y wires sent to me in his code for preference. I will not wire back in it unless absolutely necessary. W.T. from Akaba to Egypt is not good. The Humber cannot call anything in Egypt. I wonder if Major Lefroy could suggest anything. They can work up to 1.000 metres length, on a 3 kilowatt power, but have a very low aerial. I have given Lieut. Fielding £2 from my secret service money. He will return this to you in Cairo.

Colonel Wilson arranged with Sherif Feisul to get him an extra £25.000 by the first ship, from the £200.000 grant. I hope this will be enough for the present. The £1.000 bag in Major Cornwallis' safe might be sent as part of this.

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[1] Sent without indication of place (but probably from the surroundings of Akaba) autograph, signed, undated (certainly after 21 August 1917), record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/72. See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 120.

Sherif Feisal is anxious to get here the prisoners willing to join his army from the P. of W. Camp in Egypt. He asks for them without equipment or extra training. Nessib el Bekri, going to Egypt on Hardinge, can bring the draft down. I hope this question may be settled in this way – or that the Belkis after trying the men, may report "none willing".

Feisul suggests that the Egyptian Red Crescent might send a commission, or friends, for the relief of Syrian deports to Asia Minor. He has reason to believe that they are being badly treated. Do you think it would be possible to arrange this.

Auda abu Tayi wants a set of false teeths. The ships doctor question their ability to cast his mouth in wax. Could a dental assistant be sent down from Egypt to do what is possible here? For all reasons it is not desirable to let Auda go away to Egypt for long.
TELawrence

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92. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (27 August 1917)

General Clayton,
the race Fisher is leaving for Egypt today, and I am writing to you again, since I may not have another opportunity for post for some time. The situation here has not changed in any way. I have stayed on in Akaba at Feisal request, since he is altogether overwhelmed by the cloud of visitors, the new condition, and the local difficulties arising. He is in very poor health, which makes things difficult.

Operation
The Abu Tayi are owed two months' wages. Till they receive this we can hardly ask them to undertake a new job. However they will be the first charge on the funds the Hardinge is bringing, and we will them undertake the Railway between Maan and Mudowwara. There are seven waterless stations here, and I have hope that with the Stokes and Lewis guns we may be able to do something fairly serious to the line. If we can make a big break I will do my best to mantain it, since the need for shutting down Weij altogether is becoming urgent.

As soon as the Railway attack is begun a force of "regulars" will enter the Shobek, Kerah hills and try to occupy them.

If the operations are part-successful, the Turkish force at Fuweileh will probably be withdrawn, or reduced, and our position at Akaba then becomes safe. We cannot attack Fuweileh, and its retention in force by the Turks after the rains would be serious. At the same time I have little fear of anything unfortunate happening, since by intending threats on the Railway we can force the Turks to increase their forces there, and I believe that the Hejaz line is already working to full capacity to support the troops now between Deraat and Medain Salah. For this reason I do not think they can at once defend it, and attack Akaba on the necessary scale.

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[1] Autograph signed and dated '27.7.17' sent from Akaba (probably) to General Clayton, on letterhead 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo. telegrams: Arbur, Cairo. Telephone: Cairo 5595, 5615'. Record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/73. See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters* with some variations, p. 124.

Captain MacIndoe has shown me a report he has written on the local military situation. The facts are, I think, correctly stated, but he appears to overrate the man-power factor in this area. I have found hitherto that questions of Railway capacity, traffic conditions, camels, water and roads count for far more than the quantity or quality of troops on each side. To send the Camel Corps down to Akaba at present, and to attack the Railway with it, would, I am convinced, subtract from the Sherif such Beduin as are helping him now and involve almost a certainty of conflict between the Arabs and our Camel corps. One squabble between a trooper and an Arab, or an incident with Beduin women, would bring on general hostilities. An Arab victory next month, or an Arab defeat, might modify their present attitude. In the latter case (as in the Rabegh question) it might be too late to prevent disaster: but I would prefer personally to run their risk rather than incur the certainty of trouble by bringing down Imperial troops now. If Imperial troops are sent, to carry out an offensive against the Railway, sufficient supports must be sent to hold their L. of C. in view of the probability of Beduin raids against them, and the Wadi Itm is not an easy line to guarantee in such case. However I take it that no modification of the policy agreed upon in Cairo will be decided upon, without my being again an opportunity of putting forward my views in detail.

Supplies

This is a very difficult question just now. Feisul is dealing with it as vigorously as possible, and it may be modified by a success in the Kerak hills. It seems however as if we had underrated the local requirements. A list of the incumbed Beduin camel men was brought in yesterday, complete, and amounts to 22.000 men. I have not seen a quarter of this total, and the lists are being revised today. I will send the new total if finished before the steamer steams. The true number will not be known till pay-day. Besides the men now inscribed there are hundreds (almost thousands) of others coming in daily. The slide of Arabs towards the Sherif was obvious when Nasir was here, and has become immense, almost impossible, since Feisal arrived. He is unable even to see all the head sheikhs of the new-comers. All have to be fed while here, and for the return journey, and the imposition (quite unavoidable) is very serious.

In addition to the ration of the fighting men the Howeitat point out that their families are starving. Feisal tells them to go and buy food for them, and they retort that there is nothing for sale in Akaba. If flour, rice and coffee and sugar were for sale here we could turn over thousands per week: it would save a huge waste of rations, and supply the supply question generally. I know that the transport is a difficulty almost insurmontable, but if by any chance an extraordinary call of the Khedival line from Jedda could be arranged for Akaba it would be a great relief. Feisal says there are many Jidda merchants with food stuff for sale who could come here at once. At present, thanks to Nasir's having had to give rations to the Arabs' families there remain in store at Akaba 531 bags of flour and 812 of rice, only. There is enough coffee and sugar, and 863 bags of barley, which is good – but the flour will hardly last us tell the September amounts arrive, unless they arrive punctually. It is now impossible to supply the up-country troops, and in consequence Ibn Nueir, Gasim abu Duneig, and Mifleh abu Riheiba, with their Arabs, have had to go in to Maan to surrender to the Turks. They went unwillingly, but it in rather a blow to the Arab prestige up at Guweira.

The August allowance, which was I believe calculated on 10.000 heads, proves to have been just right, so far as the Howeitat are concern. What is breaking down the situation is

(a) the need of keeping a reserve till the September allowance is notified;
(b) the arrival here of Sherif Maalla with Shadi Aleyan;
(c) the visitors from the North.

(a) is unavoidable, till a reserve dump can be established under Captain Goslett here; (b) means 2.000 extra mouths; (c) is an indefinite and floating quantity, at present in the neighbourhood of 2,500 a day, but liable to irregular increase. I am afraid the provision of food on sale, promptly, at Akaba will appear to you too difficult to establish. Its great value, to me, would be that we would have an immediate touch stone to show whether the present apparent need is real or not. The Howeitat swear they are starving, and produce piteous evidences of it: but I suspect a good deal of it is mere begging, as they know that any food that they may extract this way will be gratis. I doubt their spending very much of their wages on food, if it was for sale at a stiff price. There is no doubt though, that the strangers would, since they are in real want.[1]

Jafar Pasha

Is on the whole fairly sensible, I think, and shows more comprehension of the Arab point of view than any of the Syrian officers. Captain MacIndoe criticises his force rather bitterly, but their real object is not so much to engage Turkish force on equal terms, as to stiffen the Beduin resistance, by providing the comforting spectacle of a trained reserve, and to impress the Turks with the fact that behind the Beduin screen lies as unknown quantity, which must be disposed of before they can conquer Akaba. The Turkish C.-in-C. cannot risk arriving here with less than two thousand men, because Jaafar has two thousand men: their quality, so long as it is not proved bad by premature action, has of necessity to be estimated by the Turks as good. Of course it would be nice and much simpler for us if the Arab Movement emerged from the bluff-and-mountain-pass stage, and became a calculable military problem: but it hasn't yet, and isn't likely to. Jafaar's force is serving its moral purpose admirably, and if he can find reliable officers to handle the men tactfully and improve their discipline, it may become of practical value in the near future. Most of the Syrian officers are such blind prejudiced fools.

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[1] In the original, the page is cut at this point as if to eliminate a subsequent part. Resumes on the next sheet (numbered '3' by Lawrence), with the first lines on Jafar Pasha (up to 'impress the Turks') after which the page is still cut and the text continues to the new page which is numbered '4'. There does not seem to have been any break in the text.

I don't think that any appreciation of the Arab situation will be of much use to you, unless its author can see for himself the difference between a national rising and a campaign.

I'm writing to Cornwallis for some trifles for Sherifs and Sheikhs. I have asked for such things before and will have to again. The cost will never be very large, and even if it was, and I spent say 5% of the Syrian grant on the private supplies, yet I fancy it would pay me. We want the Arab to keep step with our tune in this next affair, and to do that they must (or their heads must) dance when we pipe. This means being on easy terms with them all. Please explain, if necessary, to E.E.F. that a gold watch may sometimes carry further than a hundred rifles.

TELawrence

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93. *Report by Clayton*[1] (7 September 1917)

[...] I myself visited Akaba on the 1st September and had a long talk with Emir Feisal and Major Lawrence. [...] It is upon the Beduins that we have to depend, and although they now profess loyalty and allegiance to Emir Feisal, they are at present an unknown quantity except the sections of the Hueitat who have already proved themselves under Major Lawrence and Auda Abu Tayi. Major Lawrence is now proceeding to operate against the railway between Maan and Mudawwara with a view to cutting the line seriously South of Maan. [...]

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[1] Typescript sent (probably) from Cairo, on 7 September 1917, to Operations Headquarters, 1st echelon, signed, numbered 172/2439, stamped 'Secret' in the upper margin, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/75. It summarizes, by paragraphs, what Lawrence had detailed in the previous letter.

94. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (23 September 1917)

Akaba sept. 23

General Clayton,

I left on September 7 with the two British gun instructors, and two Sheiks of the Ageilat Beni Atyeh, from Mudowwara. My hope was to raise 300 men in Guweira, and take Mudowwara station.

We rode gently to Guweira, where was a large camp, little water, and great tribal heartburnings. The sub-tribe I was relying on were not yet paid, and Auda Abu Tay was making trouble by his greediness, and attempting to assume authority on all the Howeitat. It was impossible to get either men or camels, so I moved to Rum, 5 hours SSE of Guweira. There are good springs, difficult of access, at Rum, some pasturage, and the most beautiful sandstone cliff-scenery.

At Rum the Dumanyeh came in on September 12, mutinous. The situation became unpleasant, so I rode to Akaba, saw Feisul, and return on the 13th with the promise of 20 baggage camels, and Sherif Abdullah Ibn Hamza el Fair, who tried to smooth over the local friction.

On September 15th the camels arrived, and on the 16th we started for Mudowwara with a force of 116 Beduins, made up of Toweiha, Zuweida, Darausha, Dumaniyeh, Togatga and Zelebani Howeitat, and Ageilat Ben Atyeh.

Sheihk Zaal was the only capable leader, and Auda's pretensions had made the other sub-tribe determined not to accept his authority. This thrown upon me a great deal of details work, for which I had no qualification, and throughout the expedition I had more preoccupation with questions of supply and transport, tribal pay, disputes, division of spoil, feuds, march order and the like, than with the explosive work which showed more properly have been mine. The Sherif with me, Nasir al Harith, went blind the first day out and was useless.

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[1] Manuscript sent from Akaba on 23 September 1917, signed and dated. Record no. FO/882/4 HR/17/16, Public Record Office 67/A, Veering Office 882.4 (Xerox copy). Published, with numerous and substantial omissions, in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 65, 8 October 1917 with the title 'Haret Ammar Raid', preceded by the note: 'The following report on his raid has been furnished by Major Lawrence, C.B.'. The print publication was preceded by an annotation by Cornwallis, Director of the Arab Bureau, in the article 'Arabia. North West. Intelligence': 'The only important operation to be recorded on the northern section is Major Lawrence's raid at Haret Ammar detailed below.' Here I have followed the original manuscript, forwarded by Clayton to London on 29 September 1917 (FO/882/4 HR/17/16) with the following comment: 'I forward herewith a report by Major Lawrence, C.B., on his recent attack on the railway near Mudawara. I am sending it in extenso as I consider it a very typical instance of Arab operations. [...] The success of this small operation should have effects considerably beyond the importance of the action itself. It will raise the spirit of the Arabs throughout and will without doubt be reported throughout Arab districts and its magnitude will not lose as the news travels. [...] I beg to call attention once more to the gallantry displayed by Major Lawrence and the successful manner in which he managed his irregular force.' The entire report of the attack to Haret Ammar was used by Lawrence for Chapters LXV and LXVI of *Seven Pillars*.

We reached Mudowwara well on Sept 17, in the afternoon, after 13 hours march and went down at dusk to the station, about 3 miles further East. We got within 300 yards of it, but could find no position for a Stokes gun. The station is large, and the garrison seemed to be between 200 and 300 men, and I was doubtful whether it would be wise to take it on with the rather mixed force I had: so in the end I went back to the well and on the 18th moved Southward into sandy country. It is hope to make Mudowwara the object of some further operations.

In the afternoon of September 18 I laid an electric mine, in about 5 hours work, over a culvert at km. 587 on the outside of a curve towards some low hills, 300 yards away, where Stokes+Lewis guns could be placed to rake the length of either north or south bound trains. The position was too high for the best machine gun work, but the presence of a British machine gunner made safety-play advisable.

We slept near the mine, but were seen by a Turkish watching post near Km. 590 in the afternoon, and at 9 AM on the 19th about 40 men are sent from Harrat Ammar (Kalaat el Ahmar on Map Maan 1/500,000) to attack us from the South, where the hills were broken and difficult to keep clear. We detached 30 men to check them, and waited till noon, when a force of about 100 men moved out from Mudowwara and came slowly down the line, to outflank us on the North. At 1 p.m. a train of two engines and twelve box wagons came up slowly from the South, shooting hard at us from loopholes and positions on the carriage roofs. As it passed I exploded the mine under the second engine, hoping the first would then go through the culvert: the Lewis guns cleared the roof of the train meanwhile. The mine derailed the front engine, smashing its cab + tender, destroyed the second engine altogether, and blew in the culvert. The first wagon up-ended into the hole, and the succeeding ones were shaken up. The shock affected the Turks, + the Arabs promptly charged up to within 20 yards, and fired at the wagons, which were not armored. The Turks got out on the far side, & took refuge in the hollow of the bank (about 11 feet high) and fired between the wheels at us. Two Stokes bombs at once fell among them here, and teared them out, towards some rough country 200 yards NE of the line. On their way there the Lewis gun killed all but about 20 of them, and the survivors threw away they rifles and fled towards Mudowwara. The action took ten minutes.

The Arabs now plundered the train, while I fired a box of guncotton on the front engine, and damaged it more extensively. I fear however that it is still capable of repair. The conditions were not helpful to good work, for there were many prisoners and women hanging on to me. I had to keep peace among the plunderers, and the Turks from the South opened fire on us at long range just as the train surrendered, since our covering force on that side came in to share the booty.

The baggage in the train was very large, and the Arabs went mad over it. In any case a Beduin force no longer exists when plunder has been obtained, since each man only cares to get off home with it. I was therefore left with the two British N.C.O.s and Zaal and Howeimil of the Arabs, to ensure the safety of the guns and machine guns. It was impossible to complete the destruction of the first engine, or burn the trucks. We destroyed 20 rounds of Stokes shell, and some SAA, whose detonation kept back the Turks for a time. The north and south Turkish forces were both coming up fast, and our road back was commanded by hills which they were already occupying. I abandoned my own baggage, and got away the men and guns to a safe position in the rear. Zaal was there able to collect 13 men, and at 3 P.M. we counterattacked the hills, and regained our camping ground. We the managed to clear off most of the kit, though some of it, in the most exposed position had to be left. Sergt. Yells come up with a Lewis and we retired ridge by ridge from 4.30 p.m. with no losses except four camels.

The Turkish killed amounted to about 70 men, with about 30 wounded (of whom many died later). We took 90 prisoners, of whom 5 were Egyptian soldiers captured by the Turks near Hedia, 10 were women, and 9 Medina men, deported by the Turks. An Austrian 2nd Lieut. who (with about 13 men, sergeant instructors) was on the train was killed. Only 68 of the prisoners were brought in to Akaba.

From 5 p.m. we rode hard northward, to Mudowwara well at 8 P.M. We watered that night, without interruption from the Turks, which was good fortune for the station is only 3 miles away, and the Arab camels were so loaded with booty as to be useless for a fight. We left the same evening and got to Rum on the night of Sept 20.

The promptness of the Turkish attack, the smallness of my force, and the amount of spoil made or retreat inevitable. I had hoped to hold the line for a considerable time, and still hope that with proper arrangements it may be possible. The country about Mudowwara (whose station is, I feel sure, the key of the Maan-Tebuk railway) is so bare of grazing that the maintenance of a large blockading force is not feared but the water difficulties for the Turks makes a heavy attack by them, if Mudowwarra is once lost, improbable.

The Arab casualties were one killed and four wounded.

TELawrence

A.

The mine was a sandbag of 50 lbs. of blasting gelatine headed into one lump. It was set between the ends of two steel sleepers, in contact with earth, + with the base of the rail. Four inches of sand + ballast was laid over it. The spot chosen was over the south haunch of a three-meter arched culvert, and the contact wires were buried down the embankment, across a hollow, + up a low rocky ridge beyond. A naval waterproof detonator was used, as army detonators were not available. The burying of the contact wires took nearly four hours, since stiff single wires were supplied. A very light twin cable would be more use. It proved extremely difficult (on the score of weight), to carry off the wires after use.

The length of cable available was 200 yards, but for reasons of observation I had to stand at 100 yards only. The shock of the explosion was very severe + parts of cylinders, wheels, pistons and boiler plating fell all over the place to a radius of 300 yards from the locomotive. The whole side of the engine was blown off, + half the culvert brought down. People in the trucks complained of shock. Had I fired the mine under the front engine I think both have been wrecked. One was a Hejaz machine, and one a D.H.P. engine.

I should advise two mines being laid, about 100 yards apart, in future, if exploders are available, since trains will now probably be fitted with an armored machine-gun truck, which might be broken off the train first.
TEL

B.
I hope some notice may be taken of the two gun-instructors, Sergt. Yells A.I.F. and Corporal Brook 25/R.W.F. who came with me on this trip. Neither spoke a word of Arabic, and they went into action with only Beduin in support, against superior numbers. (Conditions were really quite safe, but their experience of Arabs was not large enough to make them comfortable). They accounted for about half the Turkish casualties, and behaved as well on the march as in action. [An erased line in parentheses reads: though they not resist the local water which was a little thick + quite fairly strong] I do not think the Arabs could possibly have carried the train before Turkish relief came, had they not been present.
TEL[1]

C.
Kit lost on 19.9.17 in action

Corporal Brook
1 towel
Sergt Yells
1 Greatcoat
2 Blankets
1 Waterbottle + string

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[1] Combined with the handwritten report on larger sheets, Lawrence had enclosed a lined piece of paper, clearly detached from his usual type of notebook used in the field. Here he had written what follows in the transcribed text.

General Clayton
I hope the above may be replaced without cost to the men. The Turkish fire was too hot (300 yards range) to make an attempt to recover it proper.
TELawrence[1]

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95. *Lawrence to Clayton*[2] (10 October 1917)

General Clayton
I left Akaba on 27 September, to test an automatic mine on the Hejaz railway. In view of the possibility of wider operations in October, I took with me Lieutenant Pisani, of the French section at Akaba, and three educated Syrians (Faiz and Bedir el Moayad, and Lutfi el Asahi), to train in anti-[erased here: train] railway measures.

We marched to Rum on Sept. 29, where we stopped three days. Lieut. Pisani had fever, and I spent the time in showing him and the others the preliminary work of mining, and arranging with Sherif Hashim, a Shenabra, who is O.C. Rum, details of the Bedouin force required. Feisul's orders to him were to go where, when, and as I wanted. In an endeavour to get over the difficulties caused by Audah's pretensions, I appointed Sheikh Salem el Alayan (Dumaniyeh) as O.C. Bedouins, and asked for only Dumaniyeh and Darausha, to total about forty in all. This number would have been enough to deal with a wrecked train, and easy to handle in the Fasoa district (for which I was bound), where the wells are small. However the enormous haul of booty in the train blown up [erased here: early] in September near Mudowwara had completely turned the heads of the Huweitat, and hundreds clamoured and insisted on [erased here: being] part in my new expedition. We had a great deal of difficulty, and in the end I accepted nearly 100 Darausha, and fifty Dumaniyah, including every Sheikh in the two tribes. All other tribes were refused.

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[1] Information on Lawrence's report was sent by General Clayton to the Director of Military Intelligence, London (typescript dated 30 September 1917, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/85) with the following notes: '[...] Major Lawrence's report on the destruction of the railway train and bridge between Heret el Amara and Mudowara on the 19th instant, has now been received. The Turkish killed amounted to about 70 men and about 30 wounded (of whom many died later). He took 90 prisoners, of whom 5 were Egyptian soldiers captured by the Turks near Hedia; 10 were women and 9 were Medina men deported by the Turks. An Austrian 2nd Lieutenant who (with about 13 men - sergeant instructors) was on the train, was killed. Only 68 of the prisoners were brought in to Akaba. [...]'.

[2] Original autograph manuscript signed and dated 'Akaba 10.10.1917', directed to Clayton, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/87. Preceded by the annotation that appears, handwritten, added by Clayton: 'Raid near Bir esh-Shediyah The following report, dated 10 October, has been received from Major Lawrence, C.B.' Published with variations in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 66, 21 October 1917 with the title 'Raid near Bir esh-Shediyah'. Here I have followed the original manuscript. See Chapter LXXII of *Seven Pillars*.

A feature of the Howeitat is that every fourth or fifth man is a sheikh. In consequence the head sheikh has no authority whatever, and as in the previous raid, I had to be O.C. of the whole expedition. This is not a job which should be undertaken by foreigners, since we have not so intimate a knowledge of Arab families, as to divide common plunder equitably. On this occasion, however, the Bedouins behaved exceedingly well, and everything was done exactly as I wished; but during the [erased here: five] six days' trip I had to adjudicate in twelve cases of assault with weapons, four camel-thefts, one marriage settlement, fourteen feuds, two evil eyes, and a bewitchment. These affairs take up all one's spare time.

We marched [erased here: to Kilometer] up Wadi Hafri (which drains into el-Gaa, NE of Rum, a central basin into which W. Hesma and W. Rabegh also pour) to its head near Batra, where we watered with some difficulty owing to scarcity of supply, and the numerous Arab families at the well. The area between Batra and the railway is full of Arab tents. From Batra we marched on Oct. 3 to near kilo. 475 [erased here: on Oct. 3], where I meant to mine; but we found Turkish guard posts (of 15 to 25 men) too close to the suitable spots. At nightfall, therefore, we went away to the south, till midnight, when we found a good place, and buried an automatic mine in Km. 500.4. The nearest Turkish post was 2,500 m. away on the S. On the N. there was no post for nearly 4,000 yards. The mine-laying took the five of us two hours, and then we retired 1500 yards from the line, and camped. On the 4th no train passed. On the 5th a water-train came down from Maan at 10 AM, and went over the mine without firing it. I waited till midday and then, in two hours, laid an electric mine, over the automatic. The Turks patrolled the line twice daily, but one may usually reckon on their all sleeping at noon; and nobody saw us, as before. We then disposed the Arabs to attack the train when it did come, and waited till the morning of October 6, for one to arrive.

The line here crosses a valley on a bank twenty feet high, and 500 yards long. The bank was pierced by three small bridges, at intervals of about 200 yards. We laid the mines over the southernmost, took the cables along the track to the midmost (the firing position), and put two Lewis guns in the northernmost, whence they were in a position to rake the embankment. From this northern bridge ran up westward a two-foot deep torrent bed, spotted with broom bushes. In these the men and guns hid till wanted.

On the 6th the train (12 wagons) came down from Maan at 8 AM. It arrived only 200 yards in advance of the Turkish patrol (of 9 men), but this gave us time to get into position. From the open bed of the valley in front of the line, where I was sitting to give the signal for firing, it was curious to see the train running over the top of the bank with the machine gunners and exploders dancing war dances beneath it in the bridges. The Arabs behind me were beautifully hidden, and kept perfectly still.

The explosion shattered the fire-box of the locomotive (No. 153, Hejaz), burst many of the tubes, threw the l.c. cylinder into the air, cleaned out the cab, warped the frame, bent the two near driving wheels and broke their axles. I consider it past repair. Its tender, and the front wagon were also destroyed, and one arch of the bridge. The couplings broke, and the last four waggons drifted backwards downhill out of fire. I was too late to stop them with a stone. A Kaimmakam, General Staff, appeared at one window, and fired at us with a Mauser pistol, but a Bedouin fired into him at 20 yards, and he fell back out of sight, and I hope damaged.[1] The eight remaining wagons were captured in six minutes. [erased here: Kill] They contained about 70 tons of foodstuffs, "urgently required at Medain Salih for Ibn Rashid", according to way-bills captured with it. We carried off about a third of this, and destroyed another third or more. The Turkish killed amount to about 15.[2] Some civilians were released, and four [erased here: captured] officers [erased here: carried off with us] taken prisoner.

The plundering occupied all the energies of our Beduins, and Turkish counter attacks came up unopposed from N and S. I rolled up the electric cables first of all, and as they are very heavy and I was single-handed, it took nearly ¾ of an hour. Then two chiefs of the Darausha came to look for me. I went up to the top of the bank, hoping to fire the train, but found about 40 Turks coming up fast and only 400 yards off. As the nearest Beduins were 1,000 yards off, and they were all on foot, driving their laden camels at top speed westward, I felt that [erased here: the] it would be foolish to delay longer alone on the spot, and so rode off with the two Arabs who had come back for me. We all reached Rum safely on the 7th, and Akaba on the 8th, where I found telegrams asking me to come up to G.H.Q.

The raid was intended as an experiment only, and was most successful. The automatic mine failed, but I proved able to keep 150 Beduins, in a camp 1,500 yards from the line, for three days without giving the Turks warning of our presence, in spite of the regular patrols passing up and down the line. This means that the rank and file of the Arabs, [erased here: did] as well as the sheikhs, did as I ordered. The complete destruction of a captured train, and annihilation of relief parties, will be easy, as soon as I have the Indian M.G. section to support me in the actual action. The Lewis gunners on this occasion were two of my Arab servants, trained by me in one day at Rum.

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[1] Here, in the *Arab Bulletin* the following annotation was added: 'We have heard since he fell back out safe to Maan: he was one, Nazmi Bey.' If the indication is correct, Nazmi Bey (1875–1940) was a Major of the Turkish army distinguished for particular merits in the field of explosives. It was he, during the Gallipoli campaign, who mined the Dardanelles preventing the passage of the Allied fleet in the strait.

[2] Here, in the *Arab Bulletin* the annotation was added: '(twenty; see p. 415)' in reference to a note entitled 'Intelligence' which followed Lawrence's report and confirmed its content.

They killed 12 out of the 15 certain casualties, but of course went off to get booty immediately afterwards.
TELawrence

M. Pisani, Faiz el-Moayyad, and Lufti el Aseli, are now, I think, competent to lay mines on their own. I was very [erased here: pleased] well satisfied with all three of them.

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96. [*Notes by Cornwallis*][1] (21 October 1917)

Intelligence

[…] As for raids on the line, we print above (p. 412) Major Lawrence's report on his success between Bir esh-Shediyah and Akabat el-Hejazin on October 6. […] Interrogation of five Egyptian soldiers captured during Major Lawrence's recent raid on the railway did not reveal anything particularly new except some details about the supply of spare rails possessed by the Turks. […] One prisoner added that he saw engine shops at Medain Saleh. At the latter place a camp of Arabs was seen consisting of "quite a lot" of tents: these men were said to belong to Ibn Rashid and their attitude towards the prisoners was of a most truculent sort.

[…] *Wadi Sirhan*

Major Lawrence has supplied some new information about this important wadi, which affords the main channel of communication between the Hauran, Jauf and North-Central Arabia. Kaf (pronounced Djaf), at its head, is grouped popularly with Wishwasha, Nebkh, Ithra and Jerjer, as el-Geraia or Geraiat el-Milh, on the ground of common possession of vast saltworks which seem to have escaped mention by European travellers. Major Lawrence found the wadi alive with snakes, of which some half-dozen varieties, ranging from nine to three feet in length are poisonous. His party lost three men from snake-bites. It is particularly dangerous to water after dark, as the wells and pools are then full of snakes swimming about. In the daytime they are to be found in every bush. There and in the country to the south many ostriches were seen, but none was caught. Major Lawrence and three others breakfasted off one of their eggs, boiled over a fire of gelignite sticks (!): it was about a month old. They obtained a good deal of oryx meat and saw several of these heavy-headed antelopes, very suggestive of oxen. The Huweitat had a fine baby oryx in their tents. After the war it ought to be arranged that this interesting species be represented by live specimens in London.[2]

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 66, 21 October 1917, and probably by Cornwallis in his capacity as a director. The comment refers to the previous No. 95.

[2] The description of the snakes in Wadi Sirhan is in Chapter XLVII of *Seven Pillars*. The anecdote of the ostrich egg cooked on gelignite is in Chapter XLIII.

Maps of North-West Arabia

Major Lawrence, as a result of his journeys in north-western Arabia, reports that all existing maps leave much to be desired. The Arab Bureau Maan sheet (1:500,000) he found to be not bad as a sketch of the general lie of country; but the railway, he feels sure, is shown too far to the east, a mistake which leads to the underestimating of all distances from it in an inland direction. The Royal Geographical Society's 1:2,000,000 sheet he condemns for all the Wadi Sirhan and Jauf region, especially in its placing and spelling of localities. Miss Bell's traverse from Kaf to Seba Byar, the most important of the Wuld Ali watering places, he found to be good but too slight. Between Maan and Akaba he condemns all our maps, British, German and Turkish alike; e.g., an important watershed between the Hisma (he doubts the general application of this name to all the large plateau area usually so-called, and thinks it is to be used only of a single wadi) and Wadi Ithm, some eight miles southwest of Guweira, is nowhere properly marked. It is certainly very desirable to run a route-survey up Wadi Ithm, and to get the position of the railway fixed at several points between Maan and Medina. Major Lawrence's own route-sketches are not yet to hand.

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97. *Clayton to Joyce*[1] (24 October 1917)

[...] Lawrence's venture is a side show which of course must be undertaken entirely independently and timed by him, as he alone can decide on the proper moment for action. It need not in any way hang up operations against the railway or effect the general situation in Akaba-Maan area. I have had one or two gloomy letters from Feisal, but I realize his peculiar mentality and I do not attach any great importance to them, and you may be sure that I shall not take any action on his letters unless they are backed up by you or Lawrence. [...]

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98. *Joyce to Clayton*[2] (4 November 1917)

[...] Inactivity here is just as expensive as if an advance north was in progress. The country is ready and waiting to rise, and Faisal will know the dangers if the chance is missed. [...] There have been practically only Lawrence and myself to run the show for the last two months. Lawrence has had his wonderful stunts to do, and between Faisal, Gaafer and the cholera my days have been fully employed. [...] Lawrence by now must be very near his objective.

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[1] Sent from Cairo, on 24 October 1917, typed with header and handwritten signature, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/89.

[2] Sent from Akaba, typed with autograph signature, dated 4 November 1917, record no. FO/882/7 HRG/17/93.

I hope he is lucky. Fortunately he has got brains as well as dash and the two I trust will pull him through, but one cannot help feeling anxious. Joyce

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99. *A Raid*[1] (After 11 November 1917)

I left Akaba on 24 October, with Capt. G. Lloyd, Lieut. Wood, RE, and the Indian Machine-Gun Company. The Indians took two Vickers, and I took two Lewis guns with me.

We marched to Rum (25 October) and thence across El-Gaa and up W. Hafir to near Batra. We crossed the railway just south of Bir el-Shedia and reached el-Jefer on 28 October. Capt. Lloyd returned to Akaba from there. Sherif Ali ibn Husein overtook us, and the party marched to Bair, picked up Sheikh Mifleh el-Zebn and fifteen Sukhur and reached Amri on 2 November. On 5 November we camped at Kseir el-Hallabat, and on the 7th failed to rush the bridge at Tell el-Shehab, and returned to Kseir. Thence the Indian MG Company with Lieut. Wood, returned to Azrak. I went with sixty Arabs to Minefir, blew up a train at Kil. 172 on 11 November and reached Azrak on the 12th.

My intention had been to reach Jisr el-Hemmi on 3 November, but this proved impossible, since rain had made the Jaulaan plain too slippery for our camels, and the Turks had put hundreds of woodcutters in the Irbid hills. This closed both the north and south roads, and left Tell el-Shehab (Bridge 14) the only approachable bridge in the Yarmuk valley. My first plan was to rush it by camel marches of fifty miles a day. This idea also failed, since by their best efforts the Indian Machine Gun Company were only able to do thirty to thirty-five miles a day, and even this pace cut up their camels very quickly, owing to their inexperience. They all did their best, and gave me no trouble at all, but were simply unable to march fast.

I decided, therefore, to raise an Arab force, and descend on the bridge in strength. The Abu Tayi refused to come, only fifteen Sukhur would take it on, and I had to rely mainly on thirty Serahin recruits at Azrak. They were untried men and proved little use at the pinch. For the last stage to the bridge, as hard riding was involved, I picked out six of the Indians, with their officer, and we got actually to the bridge at midnight on 7 November. It is a position of some strength, but could, I think, be rushed by twenty decent men. The Indians with me were too few to attempt it, and the Serahin, as soon as the Turks opened fire, dumped their dynamite into the valley and bolted. In the circumstances I called everyone off as quickly as possible and went back to

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 73, 16 December 1917. It is the report of which Cornwallis had anticipated the news in the *Arab Bulletin* no. 69 of 14 November 1917. See Chapter LXXI of *Seven Pillars*.

Kseir el-Hallabat. The Indians with us were very tired with the ride, which was a fairly fast one, of ninety miles in twenty-two hours. The Bedu and the Sherif wanted to do something more before returning to Azrak, and had the Indians been fitter, we could have put in a useful raid; but they were tired and had only half a day's ration left, since all extra stuff has been placed at Azrak.

The situation was explained to the Sherif, who said it would be enough to mine a train, without making a machine gun attack upon it. The Bedu agreed, and we went off together. The party was composed of Sherif Ali with ten servants, myself with one, twenty Sikhur and thirty Serahin. None of us had any food at all. We went to Minifir, to Kil. 172, where I mined the line in June last. As the Bedu had lost my dynamite at the bridge I was only able to put 30 lb into the mine, which I laid on the crown of a four metre culvert (about eighteen feet high) and took the wires as far up the hillside toward cover as they would reach. Owing to the shortage of cable this was only sixty yards, and we had to leave the ends buried, for fear of patrols. A train came down before dawn on the 10th, too fast for me to get to the exploder from my watching place. In the morning of the 10th a train of refugees came up at four miles an hour from the south. The exploder failed to work, and the whole train crawled past me as I lay on the flat next the wires. For some reason no one shot at me, and after it had passed I took the exploder away and overhauled it, while a Turkish patrol came up and searched the ground very carefully. That night we slept on the head of the wires, and no train appeared, till 10 a.m. on 11 November. Then a troop train of twelve coaches and two locomotives came down from the north at twenty miles an hour. I touched off under the engine and the explosion was tremendous. Something must have happened to the boiler for I was knocked backwards and boiler plates flew about in all directions. One fragment smashed the exploder, which I therefore left in place, with the wires. The first engine fell into the valley on the east side of the line; the second upended into the space where the culvert had been, and toppled over on to the tender of the first. The frame buckled, and I doubt whether it can be repaired. Its tender went down the embankment west, and the first two coaches telescoped into the culvert site. The next three or four were derailed. Meanwhile I made quite creditable time across the open, uphill towards the Arabs, who had a fair position, and were shooting fast over me into the coaches, which were crowded with soldiers. The Turkish losses were obviously quite heavy. Unfortunately many of the Serahin had no rifles, and could only throw unavailing stones. The Turks took cover behind the bank, and opened a fairly hot fire at us. They were about 200 strong by now. Sherif Ali brought down a party of twenty-two to meet me, but lost seven killed and more wounded and had some narrow escapes himself before getting back.

The train may have contained someone of importance, for there were a flagged saloon-car, an Imam, and a motor car in it. I suspect someone wanted to go viâ Amman to Jerusalem. We riddled the saloon. The Turks, seeing us so few, put in an attack later which cost them about twenty casualties, and then began to work up the slopes to right and left of us. So we went off, and reached Azrak next day.

This mine showed that sixty yards of cable is too little for firing heavy charges under locomotives. I had first to survive the rain of boiler plates, and then to run up a steep hill for 400 yards under fire. By good chance it was impossible to carry off the wire, so the performance cannot be repeated till more comes from Akaba.

The march also showed the staying qualities of the Bedouins. They rode ninety miles without food or rest on the 8th, ate a small meal on the morning of the 9th and sat out hungry two nights and three days of bitterly cold wind and rain (we had not the satisfaction of being steadily wet, but were wetted and dried five times) till the evening of the 9th when we killed them a riding camel; after which they rode into Azrak cheerfully.

T.E.L.

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100. [*Notes by Cornwallis*][1] (27 November 1917)

Railway Raids

(a) Northern Section

We have received news through Akaba, that, on 7 November, a party under Major Lawrence and Sherif Ali ibn Husein blew up a two-engined train somewhere on the line west of Deraa. The casualties of the enemy are stated to have been considerable. The original objective of this party was found impossible to attain, and it seems to have retraced its steps to Kasr el-Azrak, and from there to have undertaken certain operations against the Hejaz railway in conjunction with other parties. [. . .]

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101. *Abdullah and the Akhwan*[2] (After 4 December 1917)

The following are notes of the talk of Sherif Feisal during a conversation which I had with him on December 4:

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 71, 27 November 1917, unsigned and probably by Cornwallis in his capacity as director.

[2] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 74, 24 December 1917. The conversation that Lawrence mentions must have originated from the criticisms made to Abdullah. For the topic of the Akhwan treated in this and the subsequent report translated here, see *The Akhwan*, Eastern Committee, no. 1265, in *Arabia. Policy towards Bin Saud*, 7 August 1918, record no. IOR/L/PS/10/389/2: 'Emir Feisal's conversation with Colonel Lawrence on the Akhwan and Emir Abdullah's attempts to combat the spread of their doctrine is reported in full in *Arab Bulletin* no. 74 pp. 511–513.'

"It is not fair to condemn my brother, Abdullah, without reserve. He is taking no part in the war against the Turks, because his whole heart, his head, and all his resources are engaged in the problems of Nejd. He is king of the Ateibah and of part of the Meteir and Heteym, and is daily increasing his hold on the outliers of Qasim and Jebel Shammar. The responsibility for order in Western Nejd has always lain upon Abdullah. When my father came to the throne he found all the border tribes in a turmoil, and Abdullah led expedition after expedition against them (while I crushed the Idrisi, by the help of the Turks) until his name was feared from Taif to Shaharah, and all the chiefs of the Ateibah came to him for orders and directions. In those days we were beset by our religious enemies, the Wahabis and the Idrisis, and were fighting for our lives. After that there was peace until we had revolted against the Turks and marched to Wejh. Then again began troubles in Nejd. Abdullah garrisoned Henakiyah, and Ibn Saud took alarm. Once more he has sent out all his missionaries.

The name 'Akhwan', which you use is not properly applied to the converts. It began as the title of the brotherhood of preachers. Now it is used loosely of the disciples also. The Akhwan take over all the Senefiyeh tenets, especially the saying that Mohammed was a man with a message, who is dead. They add stricter rules of consanguinity, veil their women even in the house, are fatalists to a forbidden degree, and hold as first principle the law of Jihad, at the call of the Imam and the Ulema. I fear always that to-morrow, when the stress comes, they will reject the authority of the Koran (in the interpretation of which they differ greatly from us), as they reject the Prophet to-day. Their Imam is Ibn Saud, but the title is not significant; yet they regard him as the head of their tarika and submit themselves wholly to his orders. He pays the salaries of all the preachers, many hundreds of them; but the moving spirit of the whole is one of the Ulema of Riyadh. They appeal only to Bedu, and sow discord between them and the hadhar. Riyadh (or the *aalim* village near it) is the centre of the new doctrine. Eight out of ten Nejd Bedu follow the Akhwan, and the Taif branch is rapidly winning over the tribes of northern Yemen. The Zobeir men are influencing the Shamiyah Arabs; one fourth of the Shammar have allied themselves to it, and only the energy of Nuri has kept it out of the Anazeh. The converts stir each other up to a pitch of extreme fanaticism, but their subjection to the college at Riyadh is absolute, and the college is the creation of Ibn Saud, who pays and feeds the preachers. He insists on peace at present, and is friendly to you. He suffers Ibn Rashid to exist till he has converted the other Shammar. When his time comes he will direct the force of the Bedu in turn against the settled peoples of Arabia: taking piece-meal, first Qasim, then Hail, then the Hejaz, then Iraq and Syria, he will impose everywhere the new doctrine, and sway the peninsula.

Abdullah is making head against all this. The first step in his ambition is to win the Shammar, and in this he is making steady progress. He has lost the Heteym, who have gone over to the new faith; but his hold upon the Ateibah is very strong, and he is daily confirming it. Without the Ateibah Ibn Saud can never take the Hejaz. These measures are defensive, and so far as his means go, Abdullah is extending them. He is also carrying the war into Ibn Saud's camp, in Qasim, the weak point of the Akhwan scheme. Aneizah, Bureidah and Rass are comfortable towns. Their young men have enlisted in our, and the Turkish government's, ageyl, and there learnt tolerance and the use of tobacco. They return after three or four years to their homes, and tell the people of the Hejaz government, where the savagery of the sheria code, literal with Ibn Saud, is softened by the humanity of the ruler to accord with the spirit of the time. In consequence the eyes of Qasim turn longingly towards us, and if the Qusman could, they would rebel against the Imam and his Akhwan. Ibn Saud usually keeps forces in their towns, to prevent this movement gaining force, and so Abdullah has to work secretly. He does not really want Qasim, but he wants to make Ibn Saud afraid.

If we can unite the settled peoples of Arabia under my father's flag, we can strangle the new faith in the desert, until it becomes again a dogmatic abstraction, as the Wahabi faith was between Mohammed Ali and Emir Abd el-Aziz. If we fail, all our efforts and victories over the Turks will be wasted. Great Britain will not profit by the Arab revival, if the tomb at Medina and the Haram at Mecca are destroyed, and the pilgrimage is prevented. Abdullah is fighting all our battles, and if he has no leisure to campaign against the railway meanwhile, he should not be judged too harshly."
T.E.L.

102. *Akhwan Converts*[1] (After 4 December 1917)

Among the recent converts to the Akhwan sect are Feisal, Watban and Lafi, of the Dueish section of the Ateibah. Parts of the Doshan got religion some months ago. Feisal became converted shortly after he had left Sidi Abdullah's camp. He has already sold off his camels, and assumed the white 'imama'. It is thought that he will settle in Dukhna, the Akhwan village shared by the Ateibah and Harb, but Suman and Dahana are other Dueish Akhwan colonies, and he might prefer either of these. Of the Hejna Atban, Sheikhs Nijr and Turki have gone over to the new Wahabi movement, with Bijad abu Khusheim. Ghalib and Ali el-Himerzi, Naif el-Jithami and Naif el-Rueis are also converts, while Mohammed ibn Hindi is suspected. Ibn Shleiwi has refused to have anything to do with it.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 77, 27 January 1918. See No. 101. Despite the much later date of publication, it is reasonable to think that this is contemporary with the previous report on the same subject.

The converted Muteir are mostly living at Artawiya, which seems likely to become one of the headquarters of the militant Akhwan. Ibn Skeiyan, Mohammed el-Hawamil, Dheihan el-Lafi, Azeir el-Sfeini (of the Hawamil), Ibn Sbeiyil of Athla, Mohammed el-Mizeini (of el-Gereiyat) and Mohammed ibn Mijal of Nifi are prominant Muteiri converts.

Of the Harb, Nahis and Feisal el-Dhueibi, Dhaar el-Saada, Zeid el-Hilali and Thellab ibn Ali are adherents. Some of the Furm sub-chiefs are rumoured to have joined.

All the above have been converted since 1914.

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103. *Arab Bureau to G.S.I.*[1] (15 December 1917)

Reference your T.A. 4611. Major Lawrence has furnished the following information. Begins. "Pilgrim route from Amman to Deraa is not passable to cars throughout. A detour into J.[ebel] El Harith would be involved, owing to hills of each side of Dhuleil-Khirbet, [handwritten between the lines: el Suwra] and so by Ghadir Abu Sawana to Ifdein (Mafrak). In winter a Ford could make this detour but not an Armoured Car. From Mafrak to Bueid Deraat possible in winter by leaving Pilgrim route on right and working along watershed from Ghadir El Abyad. During rain and for some days afterwards route from Burib Deraa to Deraa unpassable, without some days work by gang of 50 men, Pilgrim route from Amman to Kutrane not possible. Path to bridge 14 is down a cliff 250 feet high from South. Across an inapproachable bridge and through a railway cutting from North. Bridge not negotiable by cars as it is only a skeleton of girders. Bridge 15 is in a more open country but except with tackle is not practicable for cars. Except in prolonged frost or in the fine season, plain leading up to W.[adi] Meddan from South and North in each case impossible for cars. Surface of desert from Mafrak eastward to Azrak or Baghdad and Southward to Akaba in fine weather admits of high speed along a narrow belt of land, the watershed between the W.[adi] Sirhan and Jordan-Dead Sea drainage systems. Some difficulty would be met in rain as the names are not on any map, no details are of much value." Ends

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[1] G.S.I. is General Staff India. Sent from Cairo on the basis of information received by Lawrence probably from Akaba, dated '15/12/17', with the title, 'Telegram from Arbur, Cairo to G.S.I. first Echelon desp. 2005. A.B. 723'. Original in IOR/L/PS/10/644; there is also another copy in Wingate Papers, 147/3/87. See Lockman, *Scattered Tracks on the Lawrence Trail*, p. 118.

104. *Syrian Cross-Currents*[1] (Around 8 January 1918)

It used to be interesting before the war to ask a Syrian in French who were the leading [here erased: men] spirits of Beyrout or Damascus, and a day or two later to ask him the same question in Arabic. You got two entirely different lists, alike only in that all were Moslem, [here erased: for] since there are no Christians, in or out of Syria, whose "nationalism" is more than a pretty name for a European control loose enough to give their co-religionists excessive place in the administration. For this reason Christians have no share in the political life of the country, and their voices and opinions are absolutely to be ignored.

The Moslems were divided rather sharply [here erased: into those by the language question. Those who habitually] into the [here erased: western-educated clans] intelligentsia and the Arabs. The first were those who had thrown off Arab things, and bared themselves to the semi-Levantine semi-European fashions of the renegade Moslem – the Moslem who has lost his traditional faith, and with it all belief in all faiths. They spoke foreign languages as often as they could, wore European clothes, were often wealthy, used to entertain and be entertained by foreigners, and impressed themselves more deeply upon foreign visitors than their numbers or home influence warranted. Their political ideals were culled from books. They had no programme of revolt, but many ideas for the settlement after one. Such and such were the rights of Syria, such her boundaries, such her future law and constitution. They formed committees in Cairo, Paris, London, New York, Beyrout, Berlin, and Berne, to influence European powers to deliver them from the Turks, and lend them the sinews to go on spinning real dreams. Their habits made Syria uncongenial, and most of them [here erased: are not abroad] lived in foreign countries.

There existed a bridge between these occidentalists and the classes that speak Arabic first and foremost. They were the translators, who were in touch with the foreign-veneered logocrats. They edited newspapers, and produced Arabic paraphrases of western political theories. When war broke out they remained in Syria, believing themselves secure. They had preached the completed revolution daily in their press, but their hearts were shining – innocent of all intention of revolutionary processes. Their tragic astonishment when Jemal Pasha arrested them and hanged them as leaders of rebellion betrayed their harmlessness. They saw the real conspirators, men who day and night preached armed action against the Turks, walking freely in Damascus, and crowding to see them executed. Some took up the dress of martyrs, and died silently. Some in [here erased: revenge] their bitterness told the Turks the names all Arabs knew, trying to involve the guilty with themselves in punishment: but mostly Jemal only laughed.

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[1] Lawrence's report, written around 8 January 1918 and published in print as a supplementary issue to the *Arab Bulletin*, no. 1, 1 February 1918. That edition carried the words 'Top Secret' at the top left of the cover. The author was referred to as 'Major T.E. Lawrence, C.B.'. The text was then inserted by Arnold Lawrence in his volume of 1939, on the basis of the original manuscript which had remained among the papers of T.E.L. Here I followed this latest version. See www.telstudies.com. For Abbas Hilmi, of whom Lawrence speaks extensively here, see p. 190, note 1. For Oppenheim see p. 26, note 1. Emanuel Carasso, also known as Karasu, (1862–1934) was a Jewish lawyer from Thessaloniki who had supported the 'Young Turks' political movement in Greece. See Chapter LIX of *Seven Pillars*.

Thus by January 1915, Syria was deprived of her Christian pseudo-nationalists, who were either silent with terror, or the Turks' best friends, of her Levantine-Moslems, who were reaping new delights abroad, in finding themselves taken seriously by foreign chancellors, and of her Arab-revival idealists, who were hanged and buried. For three years she has been a closed country, ignorant of the programmes made for her future in allied capitals, subject to the military autocracy of a particularly ruthless and unbridled dictator, and so forced [here erased: more and more] to a more secret internal and intensive culture of such nationalist ideals as had real root in herself. Until the northern thrusts of the Sherifian army, to Akaba, and then to the Hauran, there was no outer door by which contact could be obtained with this re-born Syria of 1918, and only by casual indications could the [here erased: vigour] force and direction of the new movements be guessed. Now that we can feel the full vigour we realise how jejune the former political groups have become, and how little they can claim to represent the feelings of Syria to-day. The Azm and Mutram factions go on blindfoldedly, balancing this party with that party, and offsetting this programme with that programme in memoranda and solemn interviews with European statesmen, while in the disputed country the Sherifians [here erased: have] set their teeth and work, and the Turco-Germans bring down Abbas Hilmi into Asia.

This restoration of Abbas Hilmi may be called a renaissance of Oppenheim, and points to Germany's having at last gained a hand in Turkish internal politics. The Turks tried to use Abbas Hilmi in the early days of the war, found him double-edged, and threw him aside. Now in their extremity they are forced again to admit him, knowing that it hurts them if he succeeds. Abbas Hilmi will not serve the Turks to suppress the Arabs, but only to elevate himself – by the Arabs – to the level of the Turks. He may do this with Germany's approval. Oppenheim with his very rich Semitic nature was always pro-Arab rather than pro-Turk. He fought the ultra-Turk party in Germany till the first year of war, and was beaten. Prussia allied herself with Enver to raise a Jehad, and her Arab friends joined Arab parties. The day of the Sherif's revolt justified Von Oppenheim, too late to help Germany, but soon enough to give him another opportunity. Turkey to-day is [too] feeble to serve Germany's ends in the world. The Kaiser must have friends in Islam other than Enver and Carasso, and friends in Syria and Mesopotamia other than Jemal and Sheikh Shawish. Oppenheim has set out to find her allies on the Alexandretta-Basra lines of penetration, in readiness for the after-war.

His first pre-occupation must be the Sherif. Abbas Hilmi is beloved in Mecca, but the Sherif based his revolt on principles which are above private friendships (even in the Near East where the personal element is nearly all in all) and till the issue of the war is plain, Oppenheim will not overtake our influence there. When the Sherif drew sword he told us what he wanted, and we raised no vital objection to his claim. Since then we have helped him manfully, and his kingdom has grown from nothing to 100,000 square miles (such miles, perhaps, but the Arabs like Arabia!). He has involved himself and all his friends in the risk of gallows if they fail, or if we fail, and has pledged his honour to the Arabs in the magnificent ambition of adding Syria and Mesopotamia to his dominion. If the war lasts long enough he wins, at least enough to fire Arab minds for many years with the picture of Arabia Irridenta. The dice of the great game between us and the rest, for Arab suffrage after the war, will be cogged against the alien owners of any such province: but the asset in our hands, our control of the sea, has been so seared into the minds of the Sherif and his family, by the work of the Red Sea Patrol during this war, [here erased: to such an extent] that its importance will probably outweigh to them any sins of commission or omission, that we may accumulate.

Oppenheim's second effort may well be to try and divide the Arab house against itself. The phrase 'Arab movement' was invented in Cairo as a common denomination for all the vague discontents against Turkey which before 1916 existed in the Arab provinces. In non-constitutional country these naturally took on a revolutionary character, and it was convenient [here erased: before the Sherif declared himself] to pretend to find a common ground in all of them. They were most of them very local, and very jealous, but had to be considered, in the hope that one or other of them might bear fruit. The day the Sherif declared himself, ended this phase of the question. We had found one Arab who believed in himself and his people, and fortunately it was the noblest family of them all. Since then there has been for us no question of any "Arab movement". We have supported the Sherifian movement, and have tried to help him gather into his own society such Arab side and sub-currents as his progress has encountered. Our exclusiveness has been justified, since to date no second Arab has had the courage to range himself independently against the Turk.

Needless to say the Arab parties are not all ready to welcome an imposed head. The renegade Moslems, the Christians, and all other sects (there are few parties whose real platform is not sectarian) are dissatisfied. Their arguments are specious, and not only persuade themselves, but give manoeuvre ground for Oppenheim (and indeed for all other powers who feel alarmed at our too great influence with the Sherif) to oppose us on the highest [here erased: grounds] motives. The Sherif, they say, 'is Meccan and obscurantist. We are infidel and enlightened. Deliver us from him.' The Sherif, they imply, will be fanatical in religious questions, and crabbed constitutionally. The sacred words Progress and Nationality are to be ranged against him.

Unfortunately these charges are brought against the Sherif by parties ignorant of Arabia. The Sherif heads no religious revival, claims no hierarchical position. His revolt has [here erased: drawn] divided the house of Islam, drawn the teeth of the Khalifate for a generation. His growth is the one factor in our hands which can aid us to stem the new fanatical revival in central Arabia. His rise has killed the idea of Jehad, the very real bogey which has so often paralysed our action in the East. In Moslem theology he heads the old and slightly effete professional orthodoxy. Legally he is rather lax. Even in the holy cities he dilutes the Sheria; in the provinces he abandons it altogether, for customary law. For a first offence in Wahabi Nejd the right hand is [here erased: amputated] cut off, for the second the tongue torn out, for the third the offender banished to a desert without food or water. In Mecca the worst penalty is imprisonment. For his northern provinces, whose complex populations and commerce make a simple code impossible, he has designated his more plastic son, Feisul, as administrator. His promised programme for Syria may not be sufficient to enlist him the support of Syrians in Europe and America, but the Syrians of Syria are enlisting by thousands in the ranks of his armies. Arabs in Egypt and elsewhere have spoken and written against him. Feisul will not hear of a press propaganda of his ideas: but no free Arab has yet fired a shot against him or his forces, and every advance of his armies is done, not merely by the consent, but by the actual brains and hands of the local people, in the strenuous field of rebellion. There is no 'Hedjaz force' in Syria. Feisul accepts any volunteer for his service, allowing him to preach what he pleases, and pray as he pleases, so long as he will fight against the Turks. He says always that neither England nor France nor Turkey will give over to the Arabs one foot of unconquered ground, but that each new village occupied, each new tribe enrolled by Arab effort, is one more step forward towards the Arab State. For him questions of its boundaries, the composition of its upper house, and the colour of its policemen's boots, can wait till Turk is conquered. One may surmise, however, that his administration will differ rather in the spirit, than in the form, from the system which the Turks have gradually built up for their subject-provinces.

The Syrians abroad are as anxious as the Syrians in Syria to obtain deliverance from the Turk, but desire more elaborate reforms when he is removed, and particularly desire a leading voice in the decision of what these reforms are to be. They have a pathetic belief in the idiot altruism of Britain and France. Themselves hardly capable of courage or unselfishness, they accredit us with little else. For their sake (or rather for their words' sake) we are to pull down the new (and to us rather comfortable) Moslem Power we have so carefully set up, to launch armed expeditions into Syria, expel the Turks, and police the country at their [here erased: disposal] direction, while they exhaust upon it the portfolio of constitutions the Abbé Sieyès must have bequeathed to them. In return we are to have their gratitude, afterwards. The only difference between the Sherif's conquest of Syria and theirs (and they call it such a little difference) is that the Sherif achieves it by the hands of the Syrians themselves, and they wish it achieved [here erased: their] by our own blood. They would so much rather the Judean hills were stained with London Territorials, dead for their freedom, to save them from the need of taking dangerous rides . . . but from our point of view it may be argued that in these times of crisis our interests may lead us to support those who adventure their lives in arms on our side (even if they do not please all who call themselves our friends) rather than to rebuff the armed supporters in favour of wordy persons who claim to represent – behind our line – a higher form of culture. A spontaneous rebellion in Syria is an impossibility: the local people will take no action till the front tide of battle has rolled past them. If it is the Sherifian tide, they are [here erased: enabled] enlisted by him, and serve at a later date to advance the allied cause another step. If it is our front line, they will get on with the ploughing of the fields, feeling no gratitude, and no obligation towards us. We have only given them the opportunity of unpunished politics, in the future. When the Sherif comes, neutrality is impossible, and their decision, as between Arab and Turk, inevitable. Our coming enables them to postpone for a season the necessity of rebellion, the gravest step that sedentary man can take. Not until the prosperity of foreign control has given them renewed leisure for politics, will the need for self-government revive. Oppenheim, and the financial interests that back the Mediterranean-Mesopotamian railway schemes would like to raise an Arab movement against the Sherif, since the Sherif is irrecoverably ours. If they succeeded in limiting the pro-British [here erased: parties] spheres to the [here erased: Beduins] Wahabis of Nejd, the Emir of Mecca, and the Bedouin of the Hedjaz, they would have a plausible case for tying the town and village communities of Syria and Mesopotamia to the Continental Powers for protection against these our friends, and could do it all the more freely, since the Arabic areas south of the Akaba-Basra line are not essential to anyone except ourselves. Their material interests are limited to the settled peoples, and if they can prevent our making ourselves 'founders' kin' to the Arab federated states that are inevitable among them, they will have gained a part of their ends. The moral element, the support of the head of Islam passed from them [here erased: and in process of time will be ours] when the advance from Akaba closed the [here erased: chapter] history of the Hejaz revolt. The success or failure of the Sherifian

invasion of Syria – a new operation and a new movement – is going to affect [here erased: crucial politic of the] the other phase of European rivalry in the Levant, by determining whose candidate is going to gain control of the trade routes and commercial centres of Western Asia.
T.E.L.

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105. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (22 January 1918)

General Clayton
I am sending this letter in to you by Jeddua el Safi, to Beersheba. Will you please as soon as it arrives, get G.H.Q. there to treat him well. He will have about 15 men and animals with him, and should be given supplies by us for them as long as he has to remain there. I am asking the Commandant to do this temporarily, till your approval reaches him.

Affairs are in rather a curious state here. The places surrendered (after two false reports and a little fighting at the last) on the 15th. The local people are divided into two very bitterly opposed factions, and are there fore terrified of each other and of us. There is shooting up and down the streets every night, and general tension.

We are taking steps about police etc. which will allay this state of nerves, and I hope, produce enough for us to go on with. We have about 500 men in the place, and are quite secure, of course. Flour and barley are however dear (flour £2/10 a cwt. and barley about £2 a cwt.) and very difficult to find. Things were cheaper at Kerak, but the expectation of immediate fighting has driven all supplies there also to ground, and the Turks are no better off than we are. Tafileh will not ease up till we take Kerak, and Kerak till we take Madeba. There is great lack of local transport (mules & camels) and the donkeys available from the South are not yet arrived. Zeid is rather distresed by the packet of troubles we are come in for (amongst other things a colony of besieged Moors and a swarm of destitute, but very well fed, Armenians) and is pulled here and there by all sorts of eager new-comers all intriguing against one another like cats.

I am really sending in Jeddua for money. The figures of tribal wages given Zeid at Guweira prove rather inadequate (i.e. the Sakhur get £22000, and not £6000) and we are going to be out of funds perhaps before we take Kerak, even. Can you send me, via Jeddua £30000 special grant? This will be quicker than fetching from Akaba, even if there was the money at Akaba. [here Clayton added by hand: will]

As for operations: Jaafar pasha was up here, wanting the Beduin all to go from here to the Railway, and "cut it". Which is all very well, but not possible in the present state of affairs. We have sent Sherif Abdulla, with Hamad el Sufi, and locals, to El Mezraa, to block any leakage of supplies from Kerak, Westward, and Mastur goes today to Wadi el Hesa, to block it on the South. The Sukhur left this morning for Bair, to move slowly up to just N.E. of Katrane, and thence dash at Madeba as soon as Kerak Falls, or we get to Hamman el Zerka. Which plan we adopt depends on the reply of the Kerak people to messengers sent them yesterday. Rifaifan, the head of the Majalli, is pro-Turk, and will, I hope, hop it. Hussein el Tura, the other headlight, is secretly pro-Sherif and may call up enough courage to take a visible plunge. If so, Kerak should fall in about 4 days time and Madeba almost simultaneously. If not, there will be a delay. We can enlist 500 Tafileh men, and move up the East coast of the Dead Sea to Hamman el Zerka, and then call in the Sukhur to help. I would prefer the first course. For the second the extra £30000 is necessary and that will take, I calculate, 10 days to reach us.

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[1] Typescript, signed and dated 'Tafileh 22 /1/18', record no. FO/882/7 HRG/18/2. Only parts in Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, p. 146.

I'm sorry not to be able to send you proper figures of quantities of supplies here, but have been very busy since I got here, in trying to find out who was for us, and where they were. The conflict of ideas, local feuds, and party interests are so wild (this being the moment of anarchy the whole district have been longing for for years), that hardly anyone could straighten them out in a hurry. It is a great thing to have got most of the Bedu out, any way.

If we reach Madeba, and the N. end of the Dead Sea, we will know better whereabout the British Army is, and can send you messengers. We cannot take on either Salt or Amman, and of course, will not cross the Jordan anywhere.

News here is that you have taken Salt … but I don't believe it.

T.E. Lawrence

106. *Tafileh*[1] (26 January 1918)

A Turkish temporary regiment, commanded by Hamid Fakhri Bey, acting G.O.C. 48th Division, and composed of 3/151, 1/152, a murettab battalion of 150, with a company of gendarmes, a detachment of 100 cavalry, two Austrian Q.F. mountain-guns, and 23 machine guns, was railed to El Hesa on Jan. 19, and left Kerak on Jan. 23 to retake Tafileh. The troops had been hurriedly collected from the Hauran and Amman commands, and came forward from Kerak short of supplies, and leaving no food and few men there.

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[1] Typescript signed 'Tafileh Jan. 26/18', record no. FO/882/7 HRG/18/3. On top of the first page, Clayton's handwritten annotation reads: 'Arab Bureau. For information of H.E. High Comm. and for inclusion in the Bulletin (except the last para.). G. Clayton. 10.2.1918'. The text of the report was published, with significant variations and omissions, in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 79, 18 February 1918, with the title 'The battle of Seil El-Hasa' and the following preface: 'Major Lawrence writes from Tafila under date January 26'. Here I followed the original typescript. See Chapter LXXXVI of *Seven Pillars*.

On January 24, they came in contact in the afternoon with our patrols in Seil el Hesa, and by night had driven them back into Tafileh. The Sherifian Officers had laid out a defensive position on the south bank of the great valley in which Tafileh stands, and Sherif Zeid left for this about midnight, taking with him the 60 regulars and 400 irregulars (Ageyl, Bisha, Muteir) who had come with him from Akaba. The Sherifian baggage marched away at the same time towards Buseira, and everybody thought that we were running away. I think we were.

Tafileh of course panicked, and as Dhiab el Auran (the busybodied sheikh) had given us ominous reports of the disaffection and treachery of the villagers, I went down from my house before dawn into the crowded street, to listen to what was being said. There was much free criticism of the Sherif, distinctly disrespectful, but no disloyalty. Everyone was screaming with terror, goods were being bundled out of the houses into the streets, which were packed with women and men. Mounted Arabs were galloping up and down, firing wildly into the air, and the flashes of the Turkish rifles were outlining the further cliffs of the Tafileh gorge. Just at dawn the enemy bullets began to fall in the olive gardens, and I went out to Sherif Zeid and persuaded him to send Abdullah Effendi (the machine-gunner and the junior of our two officers) with two "fusils mitrailleurs" to support the peasants who were still holding the northern crest. His arrival stimulated them to a counter attack in which they drove the Turkish Cavalry back over the near ridge, across a small plain to the first of the low ridges falling into Wadi El Hesa. He took this ridge also, and was there held up, as the Turkish main body was posted just behind it. The fighting became very hot, with huge bursts of Turkish Machine Gun fire and a good deal of shelling.

Zeid hesitated to send forward reinforcements, so I went up to Abdulla's position (about 7 miles N. of Tafileh) to report. On my way I met him returning, having had 5 men killed and one gun put out of action, and having finished his ammunition. We sent back urgent messages to Zeid to send forward a mountain gun, any available machine guns, and what men he could collect, to a reserve position, which was the southern end of the little plain between the Hesa valley and the Tafileh valley. This plain was triangular, about 2 miles each way. The opening lay to the north, and was a low pass, through which the Kerak road ran, and up which the Turks were coming. The sides of the triangle were low ridges, and Abdullah's charge had taken all the Western ridge.

After Abdullah had gone I went up to the front, and found things rather difficult. It was being held by 30 ibn Jazi Howeitat, mounted, and about 30 villagers. The Turks were working through the pass, and along the E. boundary ridge of the plain, and concentrating the fire of about 15 machine guns on the face and flank of the rather obvious little mound we were holding. They were meanwhile correcting the fusing of their shrapnel, which had been grazing the hill-top and bursting over the plain, and were beginning to sprinkle the sides and top of the hill quite freely. Our people were short of ammunition, and the loss of the position was obviously only a matter of minutes. A Turkish aeroplane came up and did not improve our chances.

The Motalga horsemen were given all the cartridges we could collect, and the footmen ran back over the plain. I was among them, since I had come straight up the cliffs from Tafileh, and my animals had not caught me up. The mounted men held out for 15 minutes more, and then galloped back to us unhurt.

We collected in the reserve position, a ridge about 60 feet high, commanding an excellent view of the plain. It was now noon, we had lost about 15 men and had about 80 left, but a few minutes later about 120 Ageyl came up, and my men with a Hotchkiss automatic; and Lutfi el Aseli with two. We then held our own easily till 3 p.m. when Sherifs Zeid and Mastur came up with Rasim and Abdullah, one E.A. 2.95 Mountain gun, two Vickers, two large Hotchkiss, and five fusils mitrailleurs, with 20 mule M.I., 30 Motalga horse, and about 200 villagers. The Turks were trying to shell and machine gun our ridge, but found difficulty in ranging. They had occupied our old front line, and we had its range (3100 yards) exactly, as I had paced it on my way back (this mountain country is very difficult to judge by eye). We mounted all our materials on our ridge, and Rasim took all the mounted men (now about 80) to the right, to work up beyond the Eastern boundary ridge. He was able to get forward unseen, till he had turned the Turkish flank at 2000 yards. He there made a dismounted attack of ten men and 5 fusils mitrailleurs, keeping his horse in reserve. Meanwhile the Turks had just five Maxims and four automatics on the western ridge of the pass, and opened on our centre. We replied with Vickers and Hotchkiss, and put 22 rounds of shrapnel over the face of the mound. A reinforcement of 100 men from Aima now reached us (they had refused Sherifian service the day before over a question of wages, but sunk old scores in the crisis), and we sent them, with three Hotchkiss automatics, to our left flank. They crept down behind the western ridge of the plain till within 200 yards of the Turkish Maxims, without being seen, as we opened across the plain a frontal attack of 18 men, two Vickers, and two large Hotchkiss. The ridge was a flint one, and the Turks could not entrench on it, as we had found in the morning; the ricochets were horrible: they lost many men, and our left flank were finally able by a sudden burst of fire to wipe out the Turkish Machine Gunners and rush the guns. The mounted men then charged the retreating Turks from our right flank, while we sent forward the infantry and the banners in the centre. They occupied the Turkish line at sunset, and chased the enemy back past their guns into the bed of Wadi Hesa; where their cavalry in reserve put up a check that was not passed till dark. Our people mostly gave up the pursuit at this point (we had no food since the day before, and the cold was pitiful) but the Beduin of Kerak took it up and harried the flying mob all night.

Our losses were about 25 killed and 40 wounded. The Ibn Jazi Howeitat, under Hamad el Arar, did splendidly, and the villagers were very steady and good. It is too soon yet to say what we did to the Turks. To date about 200 prisoners, including 9 officers have been brought in, and the rest of the infantry (about 300) were killed. The battalions arrived in Syria very weak, and had been depleted by drafts for Palestine to an average strength of 160 bayonets. Hamid Fakhri is said to have been killed. We took 2 Austrian "powerful" Q.F. mountain guns, about 16 machine guns, and a number of mules, tents, ammunition, field telephone, etc.

T.E.L.

Following for G.H.Q. "I" only

I have not had time to examine the prisoners properly. They say 1/151 is bridge-guarding in the Yarmak valley, 2/151 in the Jordan valley, 2 and 3/152 on the Hejaz line. 2/151 came from Bosra eski Sham, 1/52 from Kerak and the composite of 150 from Amman. The cavalry did not belong to the 48th Division, nor the guns, which came from Deraa, 2/151, had 4 German Maxims (good guns, with telescopic sight) 2 Russian Maxims and 3 automatic guns. The other battalion had 4 Maxims and three automatic each. The personnel of all the force was Turk. The Austrian mountain guns are heavy and complicated. The Bedu carried off parts of them, so we can only use one, at present. We have only 100 rounds of ammunition for them.

The Turkish machine gun officers were all reserve officers, and I think, handled their guns badly. Their 23 should easily have downed our 13. Their guns fired at too long a range (up to 8000 yards) and all indirect, which was not necessary, since we could not possibly reach them with anything we had. This was the first time we had tried the attack by mobile machine guns only, without supports, and its results seem good and cheap.

T.E.L.

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107. *Arabia, North-West. Intelligence. Northern Operations*[1] (11 February 1918)

[. . .] Tafila had surrendered on the 15th after a little fighting, and the number of Turks captured there was 150 (not eighty, as reported in the last Bulletin). Major Lawrence, writing from there on the 22nd, reported that the inhabitants were divided into two hostile factions, who were much afraid of each other, and there was shooting in the streets every night. Flour and barley were very dear and difficult to find, and there was a serious lack of mules and camels. The Sherifian officers, however, were arranging to police the town and organize supplies.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 78, 11 February 1918, p. 35, as a paragraph of 'Arabia. North-West. Intelligence. Northern Operations'. See No. 106. This part of the report is attributed to Lawrence by his brother Arnold, although some information contained differs from what is reported in No. 111. See Chapter LXXXVI of *Seven Pillars*.

The situation was complicated by the presence of a colony of Moors, who had been besieged by the Arabs, and a party of seventeen [1,700!] destitute but, apparently, well fed Armenians.

A force of local Arabs, under Sherif Abdullah el-Faiz and Hamud es-Sufi, of the Terabin (adds Major Lawrence) had gone to Mezraa, on the Dead Sea, to block any leakage of supplies westwards from Kerak; while Sherif Mastur was going northward to Seil el-Hesa, about half-way between Kerak and Tafila. Letters have been sent to the Kerak Arabs, whose attitude was doubtful. Rifaifan, the head of the Mujaliyah, was believed to be pro-Turkish, but Husein el-Tura, the other leading sheikh, was secretly pro-Sherifian.

News has since been received of the occupation of Mezraa by the Arabs, who captured sixty prisoners, including two officers, and burnt a launch and six sailing boats.

On 26 January a large force of Turks from Kerak attacked the Arabs at Seil el-Hesa, where severe fighting took place. This resulted in a brilliant victory for the Arabs, who killed 500 of the enemy and captured 250, including Hamid Bey, the OC 48th Division. Only about fifty Turks escaped in the direction of Kerak, and all officers were killed or captured. The booty consisted of two powerful Austrian mountain-guns, nine automatic rifles, twenty-three machine-guns (including fifteen German Maxim machine-guns) and 800 rifles. About 200 mules and horses were also taken and distributed among the Bedouin.

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108. *Lawrence to Clayton*[1] (12 February 1918)

Dear General Clayton,

I found your letter last night when I arrived from Guweira. The gold had already reached there when I got there, and is on the way up. The roads are awful – mud, snow, slush – and of the 19 riders who left, only 7 get through. The others will come in gradually as the conditions improve. One must reckon on ten days now, from Guweira to Tafileh.

I have numbered your paragraphs, for convenience.

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[1] Typescript dated 'Tafileh, 12th February 1918' signed 'L' and (autograph) 'T.E.L.', sent from Tafileh to General Clayton, on 12 February 1918. At the top left of the typescript the handwritten inscription, by another hand, 'from Major T.E. Lawrence'; top centre, typed, the indication 'Copy'. Record no. FO/882/7 HRG/18/6. See Brown (ed.), *Selected Letters*, pp. 140–2 (only scattered parts). See No. 105 for the question of sending money.

(1) Your sending back Jeddua so well pleased with us, has had an excellent effect. I am very glad he went. The difficulties you have with Dhullam, Geisiya, and others react badly on us here, so Jeddua's contentment is a great asset. The root of all trouble as usual is the arms question, I suppose. The tribes with you are still raiders and raided, and will not give them up.
(2) There are only two roads – Zewira and negb el Gharib from Beersheba to Wadi Araba, and only W. Dhahal up to Tafileh. Dhahal is difficult for a loaded camel: we leave our loads at Um el Fenajin, in W. Araba, and carry thence to Tafileh by mule or donkeys. The I.C.C. [Indian Camel Corps] could not work across W. Araba unless they could do without supply columns, or feed from Akaba. I am still against their use, except as least resort if the Arabs fail, and I think they would have to be re-modelled (e.g. put on graze feed) in any case, before they came across. I have given Deedes' officer a few summary notes, but I know these will not be considered enough. If Intelligence still press, get them to send an officer to look. I'll send any escort he wants, to Hebron or Beersheba.
(3) I'm very glad X (I can't remember his name) came.[1] I enclose a letter to Deedes, about his scheme. If you agree, please send it on.
(4) Zeid hummed and hawed, and threw away chance of making profit from it. He had the country from Madeba at his feet. These Arabs are the most ghastly material to build into a design.
(5) The Turkish horses in Kerak are being fed on wheat, for lack of barley. Partly the tribes are hiding it, partly there is a real shortage. An officer and 70 camels have deserted to us from Madeba. There are no troops there, only a corn depot, and he was in charge. Not much corn there, either. The grain producing areas are Madeba-Salt, and then the Hauran. Even in peace, there was little export from these southern areas. However, we will see how much there is when we get there. If there is any surplus, it will be at your disposal, but the granary of S. Syria is Deraa to Damascus.
(6) This £30.000 will last the N. tribes this month, and have enough over to carry us into the middle of March. The Sukhur cost £26.000 a month, Ibn Jazi £4.000, Abu Tayi £7.000, Howeitat oddments £3.500. Cost of living for regular soldier in Tafileh about £1 a week. If the situation does not change Zeid will spend about £45.000 a month and Feisal about £50.000 for the next

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[1] 'X' is not a person but the way the British referred to 'wireless' communications sent from Hejaz and Mesopotamia. 'Y' were instead the messages received from Palestine. In communications between officers, 'Agent X' or 'Agent Y' is often referred to, while, when they cite an 'absolutely reliable source', they want to indicate a written report delivered by military post. All this was used to mislead interception or the spies of the Turks who, in turn, used special ciphers. Lawrence's addition 'I can't remember the name' was another way to confuse the Turks in the event of an interception. On the whole subject, see Sheffy, *Intelligence and the Arab Revolt*, pp. 250–6.

two months. If we take Madeba, add about £4.000 a month. I hope to spend about £15.000 on camels, shortly, extra, as agreed with Dawnay[1] in Guweira: otherwise we are wasting about £20.000 a month saved in wages. However, I have prophesied many times, and each time wrongly, so am getting shy. If the Arabs had any common spirit, they would have been in Damascus last autumn.

(8) [*sic* – no (7)] Zeid having lost his frontal chance, I am stirring up the Sukhur to out across the line by Ziza, and raise Cain about Madeba, W. Sirr, Ghor el Riha. If I get them to taste I'll ride with them, but I am getting shy of adventures. I'm in an extraordinary position just now, vis a vis the Sherifs and the tribes, and sooner or later must go bust. I do my best to keep in the background, but cannot, and some day everybody will combine and down me. It is impossible for a foreigner to run another people of their own free will, indefinitely, and my innings has been a fairly long one.

(9) The last word from Druses was a letter from Selim Pasha el Atrash, proposing a Sherif-paid force of 600 Druses, to take over the Turkish police posts of Suweida, Salkhad, etc. The Turks were not to know the paymaster, but presumably also to pay the voluntary police. The Druses are eating from two sides, very content, and all for delay. They will not declare for us until the Hauran Arabs have struck, and Nuri shown himself. I keep on preaching their weakness. They are about 7.000 fighting men, so internally jealous that it is a miracle if one third work together, and with no commanding personality among their Sheikhs, who are legion. The Hauran Arabs, much more numerous, better fighting men and Mohammedans, are tending strongly towards us. They have few arms, though, unfortunately.

+ Note by Major L. "We may adopt this plan, if it seems wise"

(10) I had longed for this, but shrank from asking for it, as it it a luxury. From a hill 3 miles away, we can see Jerusalem in fine weather, and for all I know a helio might fetch it. I would prefer Egyptians, as they talk Arabic, and don't want wet-nursing. They should bring all supplies, though flour may still be obtainable at a price (sheep £11 a head now), winter clothes and a cipher for private messages. Most useful and will pay you well in news.

(11) This is good news, as a cleaner division. What is the position of Dawnay and "Hejaz Operations"? When sending across if non-secret, will it reach if I address General Staff, G.H.Q. simply? One writes one way to those who knew, and another way to babes, and misapprehensions are so easy. I don't suppose anything I have sent you is a comprehensible without a commentary.

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[1] Major General Guy Payan Dawney (1878–1952) had been assigned to the Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force. He was responsible for training, organization, anti-aircraft defence, censorship and propaganda. Lawrence talks about him extensively in Chapter LXIX of *Seven Pillars*.

(12) For the Jews, when I see Feisal next I'll talk to him, and the Arab attitude shall be sympathetic, for the duration of the war at least. Only please remember that he is under the old man, and cannot involve the Arab kingdom by himself. If we get Madeba he will come to Jerusalem and all the Jews there will report him friendly. That will probably do all you need, without public commitment, which is rather beyond my province.

(13) Attached will probably please Col. Robertson, if explained:

"The present situation at Kerak is that the Turks have brought up to Kerak a cavalry Regt. (?7th), some Circassian Lancers (under Mirza Bey) to Katraneh, a mule M.I. Regt. (divided in squads of 100 between Jurf, Hesa, Faraifra, Rly Stations) and a number of infantry, said to be three battalions, to Katraneh, from which the neighbouring stations have been reinforced. Kerak is being entrenched, but archives have been removed. Jemal Pasha, in a speech there, said Tafileh must be restored, or the Ottoman Empire perish.

The Sherifian Tafileh force is not capable of much movement but has received representatives of all the tribes between W. el Hera and Kerak and the Dead Sea. Rifaifan and Hussein el Tiru are still pro-Turk, but no one else in Kerak district. The beni Atiyeh have come to us. I want to move the Sukhur (3.900 camel men) as far as possible together across the railway between Kerak and Madeba*. This will take 15 days or more. A gun and some machine guns may attend. A diversion is meanwhile being put in near El Mafrak, to hinder grain transport. Hatmal ibn Zebu is with us. The attitude of the peasants about Madeba is hopeful, and many have come to us. A frontal attack by us on Kerak is no longer possible, but if the Sukhur will work we may get our end by their help. They are however, Bedu, and one cannot say how they will go."

*Note by Gen. Clayton. "Cancelled owing to Zeid".

TEL

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109. *Lawrence to Akaba*[1] (18 February 1918)

A message dated Feb. 18th from Lawrence begins: "I hope no effort will be made to stir Ibn Saud to attack Ibn Rashid, as latter has no offensive strength or intention at present. It does not seem to me that he will profit in any sense thereby and if Ibn Saud succeeds it will be a calamity. Have sent 3 men direct from here to Hail. Last information via Jauf about 6 weeks old points to presence of 115 Turks in Hail, Rashid strength there is 300. 10.000 rifles were given by Turkish Government to Shammar a large proportion of which have passed into the hands of other anti-Rashid tribes. The people of Hail are pro-Rashid but adverse to his military service and will defend themselves.

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[1] 'Secret' stamp at the top right, record no. FO/882/8 IR/18/6. At the bottom, an instruction to send copies to Sykes and Hogarth. The telegram was probably directed to the headquarters in Akaba and had been relayed very late to Cairo.

Ibn Rashid [missing word] the sole surviver of his family thus the only choice of the Shammar, who dislike him intensely [missing word] will to him if threatened". Ends.

* * *

110. *Notes on Kasr El Azrak and the country lying between that place and the Hejaz Railway*[1] (After 12 March 1918)

The country between the Hejaz Railway and Azrak is practically featureless. It consists of quite barren desert, in which the valleys first run S.W., but after about 20 miles E. of the Railway, N.E., among rounded hills of limestone and brown flint. Some of the higher hills have rude cairns on the top, but none rise more than 200 feet above the surrounding country, and few of them will be distinguishable from the air. It would be possible to land in most of this area, but very difficult to get off again.

Near Azrak the country flattens out. About Kharaneh, about Amruh, and about Kasr El Weinid, the valleys are sometimes several miles in breadth, with low banks, and scrub-filled bottoms, through which the winter floods have cut treacherous little channels a yard or two wide, and perhaps two feet deep. Whenever possible a forced landing should be made on a patch of bare mud, or on the back of a flint slope, in preference to a wadi. Kharaneh, Amruh and Weinid are large ruined hunting-palaces of the Ghassanide kings.

Lava fields, usually raised 20 feet above the ordinary level of the country, and appearing in colour either grey or blue or black according to the weather conditions, lie to the north of Amruh and flank the west bank of the great group of valleys that come up from the south – the Ghadaf – into Azrak.

Lava fields resemble shingle beaches, with the pebbles made angular, and enlarged to a foot or two in length. Landing in lava fields is impossible. Their tops, however, frequently contain bright yellow mud flats, where the driven sand and dust have settled and been watered out by floods into areas as flat as tennis courts, and harder. If large enough these make ideal landing grounds, (and if possible one of these lying S.W. of Azrak will be chosen as such when required).

Azrak itself is fairly obvious when reached, for it is marked by a lagoon of fresh water, which, according to season, is an open stretch a mile long fringed with green lawns, or a dense brake of bull-rushes and water-canes. From its brilliant greenness it will stand out for many miles and should make Azrak unmistakable. The place itself is a grove of 60 palm trees, with the square

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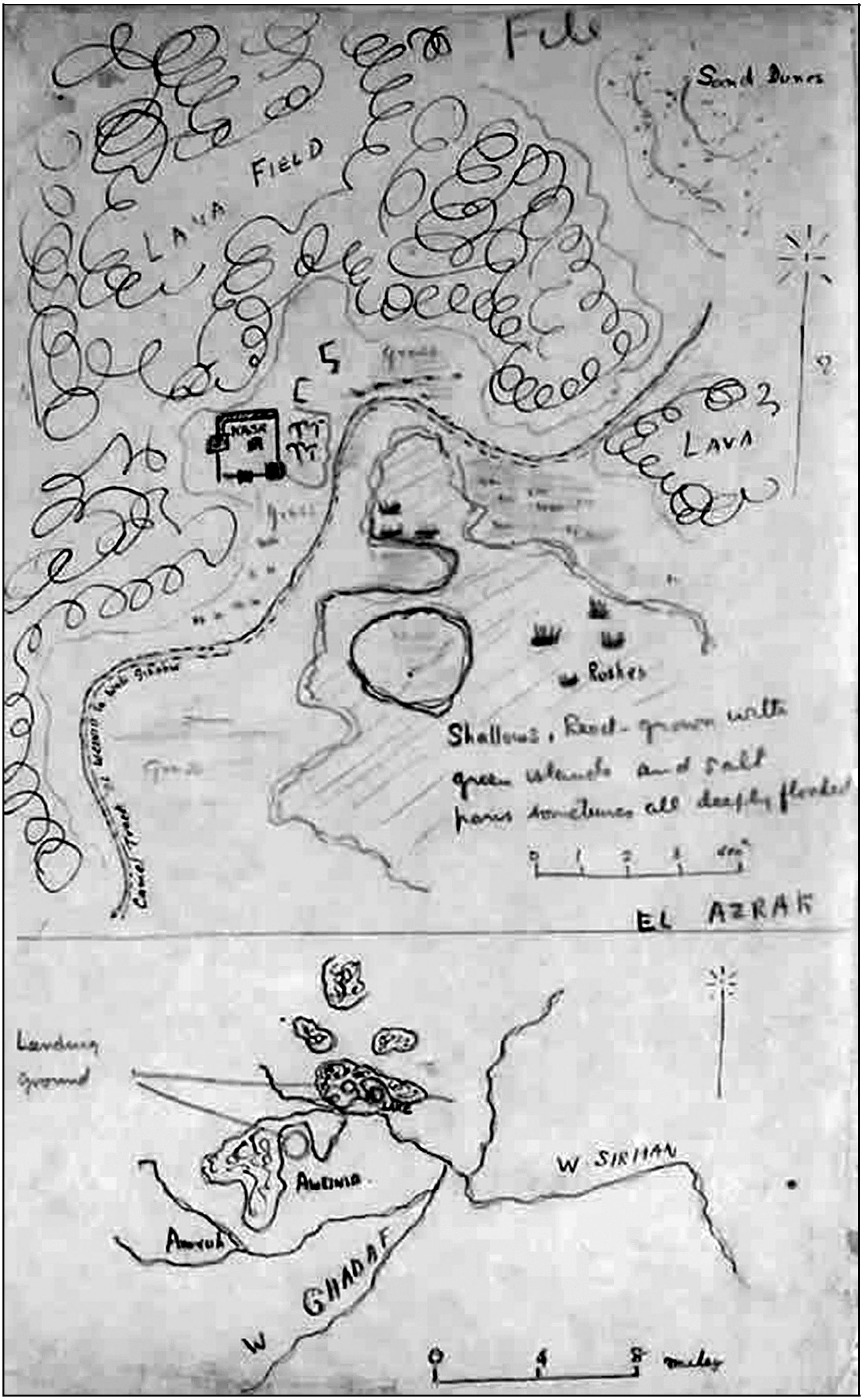
[1] Typescript with map, catalogued WO 158/640B, most probably dating back to early March 1918 (since on 12 March Lawrence he had been made Lieutenant Colonel). Not registered but numbered 'Col. 3'. At the top of the page, written by another hand, the phrase: 'Lawrence sends the following'. Below, by Lawrence: 'Damascus 1/500,000' in reference to the cartography of the British Army.


Sand Dunes
LAVA FIELD
Grass
Kasr
LAVA
Rushes
Shallows, Reed-grown with green islands and salt pans sometimes all deeply flooded
0 1 2 3 4 miles
Camel Track to Wadi Sirhan
EL AZRAK
Landing Ground
Awenia
W SIRHAN
W GHADAF
0 4 8 miles

Original map from T.E. Lawrence's report (No. 110).

court-yard and corner towers of a fort that began as Roman, was adapted by the Ghassanide kings as a desert outpost, restored by the first Mohammedans and garrisoned by successive Sultans of Damascus as a protection against the Beduin. It lies a stone's throw from the lake, is built of black basalt, and is about 100 yards square. Behind it, to West and North, is a belt of jagged lava, from a mile to two miles wide, and North of that, rolling flint plains to the outlying spurs of Jebel Druse 12 miles away. To the N.E. the lava bed is narrower, and beyond it lie the waste of sand-heaps, grown with Tamarisk, that the Arabs call Wadi Sirhan.

Azrak has no other house, and only one permanent inhabitant, but, owing to its unceasing water supply, it is much frequented by Beduin, who usually camp to the South towards El Weinid, between the lava fields and branches of the Ghadaf.

In the attached sketch-map, the immediate neighbourhood of the Kasr – the fort – is shown not inaccurately. The complex of valleys between Amruh and Azrak is not attempted, nor are the areas or extent of the lava fields correctly shown.

T. E. Lawrence
Lieut-Colonel.

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111. *Wingate to King Husein*[1] (18 June 1918)

[...] As it would be impossible to write on paper a complete account of all things, I have decided, with the agreement of General Allenby, the Commander-in-Chief in Palestine, to send Colonel Lawrence to explain to you verbally, the whole strategy of the campaign.[...] Lawrence is fully aware of everything concerning the operations, and will explain to you the necessity of concentration of the Arab effort, and what part we hope you may able to accomplish.

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112. *Tribal politics in Feisal's area*[2] (24 June 1918)

1. Howeitat.

Auda abu Tayi is at Hasa, with about sixty of his tribesmen, ami some eighty Darausha. He has been responsible for several of the better things done by Sherif Nasir's force. Mohammed el-Dheiban is at Aba Lissan, having fallen out with Auda. About 200 of the tribe are with him. Zaal ibn Moltlog is just leaving, with Faiz el-Moayad, for a demolition raid in the Amman area. Auda ibn Zaal is moving from el-Jefer to Hasa with 100 men to support Auda. The Toweiha tents are at Abu el-Adham and Jefer, and their camels near Bair.

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[1] Typewritten and autograph signed, FO 882/19 AB/18/3.

[2] Supplementary issue no. 5 in the *Arab Bulletin*, printed in Cairo and dated 'Arab Bureau, Savoy Hotel, Cairo, 24 June 1918'. At the top left of the cover the words 'Top Secret'. Record no. FO/88213 KH/18/12. Lawrence's contribution is the first one in the issue; the other two were Colonel Wilson's 'King of the Arabs' and Hogarth's 'Conversation with Dr. Faris Nimr'.

Hamd el-Arar is in Mecca. The command of the Motalga has devolved on Metaab ihn Abtan. a very intelligent, venturous, attractive boy of seventeen, who aspires to replace his uncle. He is gradually drawing closer to the Toweiha, and could lie reconciled to them for about £3,000, the equivalent of the Jazi losses in the Auda-Shaalan attack. All the Jowazi are camped at Odroh and Jerba, and their camels between there and Aneza.

The Zoweida, Amran and Zelebiyeh are at Rum. The Togatga have accordingly moved up to near Kutrani. The Dumaniyeh are near Batra.

The Howeitat remain absolutely loyal to Feisal, but are getting very weary of fighting, and have, besides, profited so materially in Sherifian service as to value their lives dearly. They still show splendid flash and courage when in action, but it is becoming ever more difficult to persuade them into the firing line. Auda is as good as ever, but more wayward, if it be possible. He has now proved to his own satisfaction that his descent from the Prophet entitles him to equality with ordinary sherifs, if not to the actual title, and with Turkish prisoner-labour, he is building himself a great kasr of mud-brick at el-Jefer. and collecting 200 telegraph poles from the railway to roof it with.

It has not been possible to reconcile the feud between the Zoweida and Togatga. Gasim abu Dumeik (of the Dumaniyeh) has however been reconciled with the Zebu, and the latter with the head men of the Beni Atiyah.

2. Beni Atiyah.

Motlog ibn Jemian is at Aba Lissan. Selim abu Dumeig and Aid ibn Benaiyan are at Runt. All are under Sherif Fahad.

The morale of the Beni Atiyah is good; but their fighting efficiency is nullified by the the sluggish incapacity of Sherif Mohammed Ali el-Bedawi. Fahad has been appointed over his head, and the Beni Atiyah are collected at Rum and Dimne, for a last attempt against the railway between Mudowara and Tebuk, after which the tribe will be excused further service. The Beni Atiyah sheikhs in Turkish pay are the town-sheikhs of Tebuk, men of little standing and less influence with the fighting and nomadic sections of the tribe.

3. The *Naimat* with Maheyhth are at Towana. When co-operating with Nasir, they have turned out about twenty horse and 120 camels, and have been joined by about 150 horse and mule from the Tafileh peasantry under Yahya el-Awar. The whole are under Sherif Husein el-Shagrani.

4. The *Hejaya* are considerably divided, Gheith ibn Hedaya is at Hasa, with his Sherif, Ali ibn Areidhr: he serves under Sherif Nasir, and commands about 250 men. Another section, under Ibn Zebbun, is near Kutrani, north-east of Kerak, and at Sultani, and still at peace with the Turks, though offering hospitality to Sherifians.

5. The *Hegeish* are at Themed. Khalaf el-Mor is sick, and Trad ibn Noweiris commands for him. They are about 500 strong.

6. Beni Sakhr.[1]

Mithgal ibn Faiz is at Kutrani, with forty horse and 100 camels. He wrote to the Sherifian Sukhur that he had £T.140,000 cash in hand for wages, and urged them to rejoin the Turks; but he sent a covering note with the letter, to say that it had been dictated by the Government, that he was to have no wages till he fought Feisal, and that he never meant to do the latter, but was forced to countenance the Turks till he saw a reasonable chance of Sherifian help. Nuwaf ibn Faiz is with Nasir and concentrating the Faiz, who are watering their camels at Themed, but drinking from Ziza (Jizeh). He hopes to move them all to Themed, which is an unpopular place, as Turkish aeroplanes machine-gun the flocks and tents frequently.

Hatmal ibn Zebn is at Dhaba intending to join Mithgal. Owisi, his son, is with Murzuk at Towana. Nail is with Nasir, and Turki is just moving to Jial (Khan Zebib) to demolish something; Fahad and Mifleh are at Towana. The Gomaan have fallen out with Murzuk about pay, and are in bad odour with the other Beni Sakhr. Most of the Zebu tents are in Wadi Hamman, and they water from Themed, which is the only water-supply in Beni Sakhr territory.

The Khurshan are divided. Haditha has moved towards Idlib; Rafa is at Towana, and his tribe east of Ziza, watering at Themed. Mtia ibn Zuhatr is near Ifdein; but a large section of Chaabna are at Themed.

It may now be said that, so far as Feisal can see, no element, indeed no individual, of the Beni Sakhr remains in active sympathy with the Turks. Mithgal's service is lip-service, designed to cover the Beni Sakhr, while Feisal prepares to help them. Hatmal is weak and unimportant; Nawaf, Nail, Trad, and Turki are enthusiastic. Indeed the last, on taking leave of Feisal at Aba Lissan, knelt down before all his tribesmen and kissed Feisal's feet, saying that as no Arab had so abased himself to the Sherif before, so no Arab would surpass himself in the extent of his services to the Sherifian cause in war or peace. Turki is a lad of seventeen, celebrated among the tribes for an almost insane courage in the field, and for his curious habit of shaving his face. He aspires to the reputation of Auda abu Tayi, and imitates the old man in his manner of direct speech and abrupt action. He is also self-concious to a degree.

Feisal is rather disturbed by this enthusiasm among the Beni Sakhr. They urge him day and night to put a headquarters at Themed, and to raise war against the railway between Amman and Kutrani. They would all – to the number of al least 11,000 – join in, and ask only for two mountain-guns, and the presence of British aeroplanes to defend their families at Themed from air attack. Their plea is supported by the fact that a Sherifian expedition in their country would put at Feisal's disposal the harvest of Kerak and Madeba, where the barley is in, and selling at £2 a camel load; the wheat crop will be a splendid one. On the other hand, to maintain the Beni Sakhr in the field would cost Faisal an extra £.30,000 a month, and he has not got the money, and cannot find it, without seriously hampering his efforts elsewhere. One circumstance only – the despatch southward from Kutrani of a serious Turkish relief-force towards Maan – would outweigh the disadvantages of a Sherifian occupation of Madeba and Kerak, and force on Feisal the occupation of the Ziza-Kutrani section of the railway, and it is to be hoped that this circumstance may not arise.

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[1] The numbering of the paragraph, in the edition was wrong and has this number '6' instead of '3' which would have been correct. Consequently, the subsequent numbering was also incorrect.

7. The situation at *Kerak* is rather amusing. After the internal troubles among the Majalli, Rifaifan went to Kutrani, and got from the Turks a personal! guard of gendarmes, to maintain himself in safety at home. Other Majalli, Kreim, Atawi, and Barakat, are. however, all at large in Kerak town, and the last recently entertained a British officer to supper in his house, while the Sherifian Ageyl bodyguard feasted in the street. Rifaifan collected his gendarmes in his house, and shut himself up till the Arab party had gone. In the case of Kerak, as with the Beni Sakhr, Feisal has to deny himself the luxury of occupation, for lack of funds to maintain a garrison. At *Madeba* things are worse. The Christians are much elated at the punishment which has fallen on the Arabs as a result of the British trans-Jordan raids, and have taken upon themselves to send a cartel to the Sherif, and to denounce to the Turks casual Bedouins entering the town. A mischievous rumour which they spread, that the British had forcibly nailed up a hat over every Moslem house in Jerusalem, was the real cause of the visit of Beni Sakhr and Daaja sheikhs to Palestine in May; and though firmly denied by Fahad and Adhub on their return, it has done much damage to British prestige in Moab.

8. The *Belgawiyeh* have written to Nawaf ibn Faiz, promising to follow his leadership in war against the Turks when ordered. The Hamedia and Beni Ghaanam sections are most eager. Nawaf's advice to the Belga, to remain quiet, saved them from implication in the first British attack on Amman. Had Nawaf acted on his own better judgment, and kept his hands off the Turks in Ziza, he would not be an exile to-day with Feisal.

9. The *Ruwalla* have split into four. Nuri insisted on neutrality till the Sherif should call them out, and is at Azrak. He intends to send his section to get corn in the Nugra plain and to fall back on Azrak at once. His letters to Feisal are loyal and sensible, and he has given a receipt for the Sherifian dumps at Azrak, while making his peace with the Turks by expelling thence Ali ibn Husein. Nawaf Shaalan insisted on joining the Turks. Nuri refused him the Juba contingent of regulars, so he enlisted 200 Blaidat peasantry, and is now

at Ziza, much to the fury of the Beni Sakhr. He waters from Themed. The Talal family have fallen out with him. Trad has moved to Rueishid and declared himself Sherifian, while Mijhem has come in to Aba Lissan with 1,200 men, and will co-operate against Jurf el Derwish. His tents and camels are at Bair. Nuri has been sent a further £5,000 by Faisal.

The split among the Ruwalla has alarmed Nuri, who sees his power over his tribe passing away. For this reason he holds on with all his might to Azrak, and will not let his tribesmen delay in the Hauran. Trad and Mijhem Shaalan are rather cool towards Nuri, whose prestige is still too great to permit of an open break. They have, however, thrown down the gage to Nawaf, and are responsible for his being entirely without tribesmen. Mijhem has been active lately in the Sherifian actions against Jurf el-Derwish.

Nawaf wanted to move into the Hauran, and his journey in Zizu was suggested by Feisal, since the Beni Sakhr are old enemies of the Ruwalla, and suspect the latter (justly) of a desire to force the Beni Sakhr westward across Jordan, and seize Moab for their own. When they heard that Nawaf was at Ziza, under Turkish auspices, they sent frantic protestations to Feisal, and patched up all internal differences to defend their threatened property. As a reward, Feisal (who had bribed Nawaf with £2,000 to go to Ziza) has promised that he will bring pressure to bear on the Ruwulla to move from Ziza shortly.

As with the Beni Sakhr, so with the Ruwalla and the Druses. Feisal's chief care is, by diplomacy and delay and small payments, to restrain their eagerness to join him openly. A premature rising in the north, while he is enmeshed in the south, would break the frail fabric he is so carefully building up, by throwing upon his transport and his treasury a strain which neither of them could bear. Sherifian propaganda is complete to Damascus, and every possible supporter in that area is prepared for his coming. It remains to see whether there is fuel enough in their fire to keep them at rebellion pitch till he can use them.

10. The *Fadhl*, under their Emir Mahmud, have declared for Feisal, but are to take no action till called upon. This is the main agricultural tribe of the Northern Hauran and Eastern Jaulan.

11. Nesib and Selim el-Atrash have joined Abu Naif and the Awamra, and sworn allegiance to the Sherif. The *Druse* block is therefore complete, but will wait instructions.

12. The *Naim* have recently taken the oath to Feisal. This is another *fellah* tribe of Northern Jaulan, with a section near Homs.

13. The *Maan* civil inhabitants are very miserable. They are ill fed, and their wives and children are under the Sherifian shell-fire every day on which the guns at Semna have ammunition to burn. They have sent in to Feisal saying that, in return for a safe-conduct for their families to Akaba, they will at

the next attack take the Turkish artillery in the rear. Feisal is dallying with the suggestion. There can be little doubt that the Mann men would be more eager to save their families than to damage the guns, and the certain good they do in eating Turkish supplies is probably more than the possible good they would do as Arab Allies.

14. The Turks have extended their humanity and toleration campaign by sending Faisal further letters proposing an adjustment. Feiwd has sent back elastic and obscure replies, tending to maintain the Turkish hope that accommodation may some day be possible. It seems a pity, by unnecessary brusqueness, to pull together into firm opposition the many old-Turk and liberal-Turk elements who now half believe the Sherif justified, and take an unconscious pleasure in seeing the Arabs defeat the Germano-Turk General Staff party in the held.

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113. *Notes. Khurma*[1] (9 July 1918)

Ibn Saud began to collect *Dhikat* (a semi-religious tax) from some sections of the Sbei this year, thus reviving his custom of four or five years ago. Shortly afterwards messengers from the Sherif, demanding the same tax, were imprisoned by Sherif Khalid ibn Elwi in Wadi Khurma.

Khalid (a lean fanatical silent man, said to be more capable than his elder brother Naif) was made Emir of Khurma by the Sherif years ago. He was converted to the Nejdean Religion four years ago, and was last year confined in the Sherif's prison at Mecca. On his release on Abdullah's intervention, he paid a secret visit to Ibn Saud, an old friend of his father's.

The imprisonment of the Sherifian messengers was an act of war, and Khalid at once collected his followers. Only the converts joined him, and they were a mixed lot of Beni Thor Sbei, Jithima, Khararis (whose sheikh, Naif, is in prison in Mecca), Shlawa and Hamarza Ateibah; and many Kahtan. The Kahtan were those formerly in the east, who fled from Ibn Saud over the Ajman affair, and have since been living in the upper reaches of Wadi Dawasir. They are not in any way under Khalid, and have only joined temporarily, for the Religion's sake.

Khalid began by expelling the other Shei, and all the villagers and freedmen, from Wadi Khurma, into the main valley Truba, of which it is a tributary. Wadi Truba (Tharba or Tarabat) runs south-west into a cultivated plain in Jebel Areysh, of the Goz aba el-Air (Joz Belair) district. Khalid proposed to install converted peasants in the palm-gardens in their place.

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[1] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 96, 9 July 1918. Preceded by the note 'Col. Lawrence, lately arrived from Jiddahh, sends the following'. The editorial title highlights the situation relating to Wadi Khurma, a disputed area between Sherif Hussein and Ibn Saud. It is from here that Ibn Saud's hostilities against Hussein will begin and will lead to the latter's fall.

His brother, Naif, then waylaid and killed four Ageyl, two Ateibah, and four women, Sunnis from Mecca on their way to Khurma for the summer. They refused to be converted, but nevertheless Khalid protested against their slaughter.

The Sherif now sent against them a very ragged force, comprising Hamarja, Biyasha, Sbei, Mowalid, Hedhlan (Hudheil) and other Meccan sweepings, with two brass saluting guns and two automatic rifles, under the incompetent Sherif Ali, brother of Shakir ibn Zeid. They were surprised by night on Bir Goreish by an inferior force of Kahtan, and fled without resistance, losing fourteen killed, and their artillery.

Khalid then repented of his action, and went off to Ibn Saud with fifty-four riders and his trophies, to beg for help. On his way he crossed an Ateibah raiding party, under Fajir ibn Shelawih, on its way to Dawasir. The two parties fought, and Ibn Shelawih took thirteen camels, four horses and the artillery, killing four of the converted, and losing only one himself. Khalid fled towards Riadh.

The Kahtan are not likely to remain long in Wadi Khurma, and Naif ibn Elwi cannot hope, with only the Beni Thor, to keep the other Sbei indefinitely out of their properties. If Khalid fails in his mission in Aridh, the complete collapse of his movement may be expected.

The Sherif hopes to enrol a new force in Mecca to retake Khurma, but is trying to conscript the town Bedouins at half wages, and in consequence has made no progress. Should he make further attacks upon Khurma, with the materials at his disposal, he may reasonably be expected to suffer further reverses. If, however, he acquires wisdom enough to accept the temporary loss of the district, and if Ibn Saud maintains his present correct attitude, then no extension – or prolongation – of the rising need be feared.

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114. *Lawrence to Akaba*[1] (30 August 1918)

Following from Lawrence begins:

"Owing to Feisal's resignation demoralization is spreading from regular army amongs bedouins. According to plan convoy and Advanced guard of Sept scheme are going forward on our orders, without Sherifian approval, and I think that situation can be hold together another 4 days. If Feisal can be satisfied by then, operations may continue, if not will do all possible to withdraw these advanced posts [missing word]ly from Bair". Ends.

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[1] Typescript, sent (probably) from Aba el Lissan to Akaba Headquarters on 30 August 1918, retransmitted the same day to the Arab Bureau in Cairo, at 12.09pm and received at 12.50pm, no. 518. Record no. FO/882/8 IR/18/6. The issue concerned the proclamation with which Hussein denied Jaafar Pasha command in chief of the Northern army and demanded the resignation of Feisal. On this whole question, Lawrence insists with illuminating details in *Seven Pillars* (Chapter CVI).

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115. *Notes*[1] (October 1918)

June 13, 1916: Simultaneous attacks against Mecca and Medina, ordered by Sherif Hussein. Feisal and Ali in command at Medina, and Hussein himself at Mecca. The heavy artillery of the Turks held the Arabs off at Medina.

Jeddah, the port to Mecca, went after fierce fighting, and then an eight day attack saw the Arabs in possession of the Holy City three weeks after the commencement of the revolution.

From then until the beginning of 1917 matters were more or less in abeyance while I made arrangements with Headquarters for ammunition, money, troops and British supports for the supply bases.

Jan 25, 1917: Wemyss directed an attack on El Wejh in person. The naval guns outranged the Turks and I went into the heart of the port with my Arabs and drove the enemy out after terrific hand-to-hand fighting.

I have now got the Harb (between Medina and Mecca), the J'Heina (between Yambo and Medina) and the Billee (Wejh) together, after heart to heart talks with the sheikhs, and think I shall soon be able to move north to Akaba and Ma'an, where I hope I shall pick up with the Beni Atiyeh. I want Akaba as a base, and to divert attention shall send flying columns north for feints against Amman.

Feb - April, 1917: Have twice been up to Ma'an harassing the Turks, hoping to prevent reinforcements being sent down to Akaba.

June 18, 1917: Began to move on to Akaba and by July 6 had reached the port. Made a detour over the mountains via the Wadi Araba and trickling over in something like single file took Fuweilah and Ab-el-Lissan, went to Gueira, then Kethura. Gueira surrended without firing a shot. On the 6th we surprised the Turks, who had all their defences facing the sea and south, and my objective had been reached.

July-August, 1917: Have spent the time obtaining the loan of one or two English units for the formation of the Akaba base. Have got Joyce, Marshall and Goslett with me, aeroplanes, armoured cars, a ten-pounder battery, a French detachment, Indians and a few other odds and ends. I think the apparently indifferent Staff Headquarters are waking up to the importance of these operations.

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[1] Typescript, unsigned. According to Edward Robinson (Non-Commissioned Officer at Arab Bureau 1916–18) 'Lawrence dictated a series of odd notes to me prior to his final report on the 4th army, and altho' they are not a consecutive story they have their interest as isolated items. There are three copies only – & this is one. E. Robinson. It was his habit to wait until we got back to base from operations & then we would forward a series of notes keeping the Arab Bureau in touch with movements. E.R.' The text here is the original filed as MS Eng 1252, (331) Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Sept, 1917: The general plan of the Arab rising now is for me to meet Nasr, go with him north to the Aleppo district, our object being the destruction of the railway, more especially the Hama railway bridge and the railway stores at Aleppo.

Zeid is to co-operate with Nuri Shala'an to raise the Druse (though I doubt their sincerity!). If this is successful we may be strong enough to seize Deraa or Damascus. If this is too ambitious I suggest that Nasr should confine himself to raids on the railway between these two places. I am endeavouring to arrange that three of the sheikhs shall co-operate – one to raise the Jordan and Tiberian villages, another between Damascus and Deraa, and the third to attack the railway between Damascus and Rayuk.

This is a broad outline of future attempts. The detail is scant, but Feisal is touchy at the moment. All really depends on the sympathy of the Syrian inhabitants, but reports indicate that this is favourable to any attempt to shift the Turks.

Sept. 18, 1917: A crowd of the Beni Atiyeh attacked a position north of Wadi Ethil station and captured it, together with twenty men, and cut about 650 rails. A train was sent with Turkish reinforcements, and before the Bedouin decamped the line was promptly cut behind this. About forty to fifty Circassian cavalry came out and tried to stop them, but although they fought bravely we cut them up. A day or so later we proceeded a little further north, attacked a crowd of sixty to seventy Turks and all these were killed or captured. A similar fate descended on another seventy who came from Tebuk. We then went north and west and cleared up a crowd of ninety, and just beyond Mudawara accounted for another forty. Then we ourselves were nearly caught, as a train came up from the south, supported by machine guns, and after a sharp engagement we retired.

The total raid ended in 250–300 prisoners, and the killed were estimated at 300.

Sept 21, 1917: The morale of our irregulars was subjected to a very severe test. About 3,000 Turks attacked us in the Wadi Musa from three sides at once, with an aeroplane helping to make things distinctly unconfortable. The Turks put up a heavy bombardment at first and drove in the outer positions held by the Arabs, who retired to the hills south of the village. Towards evening we effected a counter-attack on the enemy, and, capturing twenty prisoners, forced them to retire. At sunset they had all withdrawn to Ma'an, but they did not move all their wounded, many of whom died from exposure.

In this engagement we lost about forty, killed and wounded.

The next day the Arabs recaptured the position taken from them the previous morning, and altogether proved that they might make good material in the hands of energetic officers.

November, 1917: I left Akaba on the 24th October with Captain Peake, Lieut. Wood and the Indian Machine Gun Co. The latter took two Vickers and I took two Lewis machine guns with me. Our journey went by way of El Gaa, Wadi Hafira, Batra, Bir el Shedia, El Jafar, Bair, and reached K'seir el Haliabat on the 5th November.

On the 7th we failed to rush a bridge at Tel el Shehab, and retired to K'seir. Then the Indian Machine Gun Detachment, with Lt. Wood, returned to Azrak.

I went with sixty Arabs to Minifir and blew up a train at Kilo. 172 on the 11th and reached Azrak on the 12th. My intention had been to reach Jisr El Hemmie on November 3rd, but this proved impossible since rain had made the Joulain plain too slippery for our camels, and the Turks had put hundreds of cutters in the Irbad hills. This closed both the north and south routes and left Tel el Shehab the only approachable bridge in the Yarmak valley. My first plan was to rush it by camel marches of fifty miles a day. This idea also failed, since, by their best efforts the Indian Machine Gun Section were unable to do thirty to thirty five miles a day and even this easy pace could beat their camels very quickly owing to inexperience. They all did their best and gave me no trouble at all, but were simply unable to march fast.

I decided, therefore, to rest the Arab forces and come down on the bridge in strength. The Abu Tayi refused to come, only fifteen Sukhr would take it on, and I had to rely mainly on thirty Serahin recruits in Azrak. They were untrained men and proved of little use in a pinch. For the last stage to the bridge, as hard riding was involved, I picked out six of the Indians with their officers, and we actually got to the bridge at midnight on November 7th. It was a position of some strength, but could, I thought, be rushed with twenty decent men. The Indians were too few to attempt it with, and the Serahin, as soon as the Turks opened fire, dumped their dynamite in the valley and bolted. In the circumstances I called everyone off as quickly as possible and went back to K'seir. The Indians were very tired with their ride, which was a very fast one of ninety miles in twelve hours.

The Bedouin with me wanted to do something more before returning to Azrak, and had the Indians been fit we should have put in a useful raid; but they were tired and had only half a day's rations left, since all the extra stuff had been placed at Azrak.

The situation was explained to the Sherif, who said it would be unwise to mine a train without making a machine gun attack upon it. The Bedouin agreed, and we went off together. The party was composed of Sherif Ali with ten men, myself with one, twenty Sukhr and Thirty Serahin. None of us had any food at all.

We went to Minifir (kilo 172) where I mined the line in June last. As the Bedouin had lost half of my dynamite at the bridge I was only able to put 30 lbs with the mine, which I laid on the crown of a 4-meter culvert (about 18' high) and took the wires as far up the hillside towards cover as they could reach. Owing to a shortage of cable this was only 60 yards, and we had to leave the ends buried for fear of patrols.

A train came down before dawn on the 10th, too fast for me to get to the exploder from my watching place. On the morning of the 10th a train of refugees came up at four miles an hour from the south. The exploder failed to work and after the train has passed I took the machine away and overhauled it. This was luck, because a Turkish patrol came up very shortly after and searched the ground carefully.

That night we slept on the head of the wires, and no train came up until 10 a.m. on November 11th, when a troop train of twelve coaches and two locomotives came down from the north at twenty miles an hour. I touched off under the engine and the explosion was tremendous – something must have happened to the boiler, for boiler plates flew about everywhere and I was knocked backwards. One fragment smashed the exploder, and I left it in place with the wires.

The first engine fell into the valley on the east side of the line, the second up-ended into the place where the culvert had been and toppled over on to the tender of the first. The frame buckled, and I doubt whether it would be repaired. Its tender went down the embankment west and the first two coaches telescoped in the culvert site. The next three or four were derailed.

Meanwhile I had made quite creditable time across the open uphill towards the Arabs, who had a fine position and were shooting over me into the coaches. These were crowded with soldiers and the Turkish losses were obviously quite heavy. Unfortunately, many of the Sukhr had no rifles and could only throw unavailing stones. The Turks took cover behind the bank and opened up a fairly hot fire at us. They were about two hundred strong by now. Then Sherif Ali bought down about twenty of his men to meet me: he lost seven killed and more wounded and had several narrow escapes himself before getting back.

The train might have contained someone of importance, for there was a flagged saloon car, an imam, and a motor car amongst it. I suspect someone wanted to go via Amman and Jerusalem, but we riddled the saloon with bullets. The Turks, seeing us so few, put up an attack which caused us 29 casualties, and they began to work up the slope to the right and left of us. So we sent off, and reached Azrak next day.

The march showed the staying qualities of the Bedouin. They rode 90 miles without food on the 8th, had a small meal on the morning of the 9th, and sat out hungry two nights and three days of bitterly cold wind and rain (we had not the satisfaction of being steadily wet, but were wet and dry five times during the evening of the 11th, when we killed a riding camel.) After this we rode into Azrak.

I am sorry I missed the bridge, but it was quite impossible that night.

December 9, 1917: Sherif Nasr and about one thousand Arabs left Akaba today. The force of regular troops, under Nuri bey, consisting of about 150 mounted men, with one 2-95 mountain gun, accompanied them. They are going out for demolition work between Deraa and Amman with the Howeitat and Ben Sakr.

December 11, 1917: Another big crowd under Sherif Nastour left for the Wadi Musa, with the object of attacking Shobek.

December 12, 1917: Have received details of the wrecking of a train between El Akhbar and El Muazzam, carried out by fifty Arabs. They waited five days for the train to pass, and when they had blown it up were delayed by the arrival of reinforcements from north and south. An escort of about sixty to seventy men on board were reported to have been killed. Suleiman ibn Rafadi and Eid Rafadi were killed, with several of their followers. A good number of rifles were reported to have been captured.

January 3, 1918: The Turks made some sort of attempt against Abu Lisal (? Ab-el Lissan), occupied by one regular Arab army and two machine gun detachments. No definite engagement took place, but the Turks were harassed on their return to Ain W'Heida and probably lost a considerable number of men.

January 12, 1918: About 900 Arabs took part in an attack on Jurf el Darwish, after the line had been cut the night before north and south of the station. The Turks were taken completely by surprise and retired to the station. The Arabs destroyed everything they could and then left, the Turks occupying the position the day after. The Turkish casualties were twenty killed and 150 prisoners. The Bedouin as usual went mad over the place and left its destruction to loot, and it took us five hours before the explosives could be brought in and everything demolished.

The total Arab casualties were two wounded.

January 15, 1918: Tafile was entered by Sherif Nasr, and the Turkish garrison of gendarmes surrendered to him.

January 22, 1918: An attack by Feisal on Mudawara was unsuccessful. The regular army only supplied about one hundred men, and we co-operated with armoured cars, ten-pounders and the R.F.C. The French detachment marched in at the end of the engagement.

The position was strongly fortified, and as a result the Bedouin would not attempt to storm the place. The guns were in action the whole of the day, and all the Bedouin did was to stay on the hills and cheer at each explosion. Every shell and bomb was sped on its way with the fervent imprecation that it would fall on the heads of all the Turks and destroy them, and as this did not happen the tribesmen would not attack.

January 25, 1918: About five hundred Turks, supported by a squadron of cavalry attacked Tafile, and after fighting lasting the whole day were forced to retire. They lost two q.f. guns, seven machine guns, and 120 prisoners. A report is also in the El Hasa force is surrounded by the local inhabitants, and this suggests a very hot time for the Turks.

4, 15, 25, and 29 Januray, 1918: Aeroplane raids, with varying results.

At the beginning of the month the armoured cars went out and captured Tel el Shahan, blowing everything up in the station. This descent on the railway was an eye-opener to the Turks, and the sight of the armoured cars kept them on the jump for the rest of the operations in this district.

116. [*The destruction of the 4th Army*][1] (22 October 1918)

With the 2000 camels, given us in July by General Allenby, we calculated that we could afford to send up to Azrak for operations about Deraa an expedition of 450 camel corps of the Arab regular army, 4 Arab Vickers, 20 Arab Hotchkiss, a French battery of 4 mountain Q.F. 65 guns, two British aeroplanes, 3 British armoured cars with necessary tenders, a demolition company of Egyptian Camel Corps and a section of camel-Ghurkas. Besides these, Sherif Nasir and myself had our private body-guards of Arab camel men. This made our total force 1000 strong, and its prospects were so sure that we made no provision (and had no means) for getting it back again. The supply problem, especially in petrol and ammunition, was a very great one, and we lived from hand to mouth, without, however, ever being in serious need.

The force left Ab el Lissan in detachments early in [erased here: August] September, and concentrated, without accident, to time at Azrak on the 12th of the month. The distance from Akaba to Azrak was 290 miles, and we used the wells of Jefer, Bair and Ammari on the way. At Azrak we had meant to collect the Rualla and descend in force on the Hauran, with direct assault on Deraa, which was only held by 500 rifles – but this plan was spoiled by the unfortunate outburst of the King of Hejaz against Jaafar Pasha and the senior officers of the Northern Army, since the crisis he provoked upset the whole local temper, and delayed me in Ab el-Lissan till September 4. As a result, the Rualla never came together, and we had to modify our schemes. In the end, we decided to carry out a flying attack on the northern, western and southern railways at Deraa, with our regular troops, the Rualla horse under Khalid and Trad Shaalan, and such Hauran peasants as should be brave enough to declare for us.

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[1] Dated and signed 'October 1918', record no. FO/882/7 HRG/18/16. At the top of the first page, there is the handwritten indication 'Secret' and the title, from another hand, *The Destruction of the 4th Army*. Next to the first page, on the left, the indication 'Printed in AB 106 dated 22/10/18 Not to be disseminated' is written transversely. The report was published, in fact, in *Arab Bulletin* no. 106 of 22 October 1918, with that title and some variations. Here I have followed the original typescript. Cfr. *Seven Pillars*, Chapters CVII–CXIX.

As we sat at Azrak we put in a strong bluff towards Amman. Money was sent to Mithgal with very secret instructions to collect barley dumps for us and the British, in our combined surprise attack against Amman and Salt on the 18th. The Beni Sakhr were to mass at Ziza to help us. The rumour of this, and the rumour of our simultaneous intention on Deraa, confirmed by other factors supplied them from Palestine, [erased here: to keep] kept the Turks' eyes fixed on the Jordan and east of it, where their lines were very long, expensive in men, and, despite their best efforts, inevitably vulnerable to a force of our mobility and range.

On the 13th we left Azrak and marched over the long Gian el Khunna into the basalt screes of Jebel Druse. The Egyptian and Ghurka units were sent westward to cut the Amman line by Mafrak, but, owing to a misunderstanding with their guides, never got so far. However, our Bristol Fighter the same day, brought down a German two-seater in flames near Um el Jimal: so all was well. We got to Umtaiye, 13 miles SE of Deraa, on the 15th. This (and its neighbour Um el Surab) were our forward bases, as about them were many cisterns of water of last year's rain. We were at once joined by the male population of the nearest villages, and by Sheikh Talal el Hareidhin of Tafas, the finest fighter of the Hauran, who had come to me in Azrak in 1917. He had agreed to be our guide, and marched with us till he died near Deraa, helping us day and night, our sponsor and backer in every village. But for his energy, courage and honesty, things would have gone hard with us many times.

It was still necessary for us to cut the railway between Deraa and Amman, not only to [erased here: prevent] give colour to our supposed attack on the 4th Army, but to prevent the reinforcement of Deraa from the South. It was our plan to put ourselves between Deraa and Palestine, to force the enemy to reinforce the former from the latter. Had we merely moved troops from Amman to Deraa we should be doing Palestine no good, and should probably have been rounded up and caught ourselves. The only unit now in hand to do this cutting, since the army must go forward at once, were the armoured cars, which are not ideal for the purpose, as you are almost as shut in to them as the enemy are shut out. However, we went down in all the cars we had to the railway and took a post of open-mouthed Turks too suddenly for them to realise that we were hostile. The post commanded a very pleasant four-arched bridge (kilometre 149) about 25 metres long and 6 metres high, with a flattering white marble inscription to Abd el-Hamid. We wrecked all this with one hundred and fifty pounds of guncotton, and did what we could to the station.

On the way back we had a mishap to one of the cars, and a vile road, so did not catch our army till after dawn on the 17th, going down to the line near Tell Arar, 5 miles north of Deraa. We suppressed a little post and some Kurdish cavalry, and put our demolition party on the line. The French blew up part of the bridge, and the Egyptians, working up the line towards Ghazale, did six hundred pairs of rails before dark on our new "tulip" system.* Meanwhile we climbed to the top of Tell Arar, which commanded a complete view of Deraa, about four miles off, and we realised that there were nine enemy machines on the aerodrome. Our Bristol had been badly shot about, so they had no competition to fear, and for a time they did what they liked to us with bombs and machine-gunning. We had luck, and used our mountain-guns and Hotchkiss for what they were worth, but were getting much the worst of it, till our only surviving machine, a BE 12 from Azrak turned up and sailed into the middle of the show. We watched with very mixed feelings, for the Turkish two-seaters, and their four scouts were all of them much more than its equal in the air: however, by good hap or skill the BE came through them and led the whole circus of them away westward, and after to Ghazale, in pursuit, while we took advantage of our respite to organise and send off a mixed column to Mezerib, to cut the Palestine line. Just after this was done, the BE came back again with its attendant swarm, and telling us that it had finished its petrol, landed near us and turned over on to its back in the rough, while a Halberstadt came down and scored a direct hit on it with a bomb. Our pilot was unhurt, and with his Lewis gun and tracer bullets was soon most usefully running about just outside Deraa in a Ford, cutting the railway to prevent any kind of sortie of rolling stock.

(Note added by TEL at the bottom of the original autograph page: "* After long experiment we found this the cheapest and most destructive demolition for a line with steel sleepers. Dig a hole midway between the tracks under a mid-rail sleeper, and work out the ballast from the hollow section of the sleeper. Put in two slabs of guncotton, return the ballast to the hole, and light. If the charge is properly laid, and not in contact with the sleeper, a 12-inch fuse is enough. The gas expansion arches the sleeper eighteen inches above the rail, draws the metals six inches towards one another, humps them three inches above the horizontal, and twists the web from the bottom inwards. It drives a trough a foot deep across the formation. This three-dimension distortion of the rails is impossible to straighten, and they have to be cut or scrapped. A gang of four men can lay twenty 'tulips' in an hour on easy ballast, and for each two slabs (and single fuse) you ruin a sleeper, a yard of bank and two rails. The effect of a long stretch of line planted with these 'tulips' is most beautiful, since no two look just alike.")

We reached the lake at Mezerib about one p.m., and by two, had taken and looted the French station. The main station on the Palestine line proved too difficult, and we waited till three for the Camel Corps and guns to arrive, and then attacked it formally, and carried it by assault a few minutes later. As our only demolition parties were on the Damascus line, still demolishing, we could not do anything very extensive, but cleared the station, burnt a lot of rolling stock and two lorries, broke the points, and planted a fair assortment of 'tulips' down the line. The interruption of their main telegraph between Palestine and Syria, here and at Tell Arar, bothered the Turks a good deal. We spent the night at Mezerib, and were joined by hundreds and hundreds of the Hauran peasants: during the night some of us marched to within three hundred yards of Tell el-Shehab, intending to attack, but found that a German colonel with guns and reinforcements had just arrived. It was a consolation to know that on the critical 18th of the month we had moved the reserve regiment at Afuleh up to meet us, and we also pleased ourselves with blowing up the line west of Shehab, and, further west, at Zeizun.

Next morning we did some leisurely work on Mezerib station, and then moved past Remthe till mid-afternoon, when we were in position west of Nasib station. After considerable resistance and artillery work, we were able to carry the post on the big bridge north of the station, and to blow up the bridge. This was my seventy-ninth bridge. It had three seven-metre arches, was about twenty-five feet high, and had piers five feet thick – quite one of the finest we have destroyed.

We slept at Nasib and next morning marched gaily away to Umtaiye, speeded by a field-gun which came to Nasib by train, and shelled our tail vigorously. At Umtaiye we rejoined the armoured cars, which had returned direct from Arar after covering the demolitions: and as we had that morning seen an enemy aeroplane land near the railway west of Umtaiye, we at once took two cars down to look at it. We found three two-seaters there, but for a deep gully could not rush their aerodrome. Two got up and troubled us, but we were able to put one thousand five hundred bullets into the third, and finished it. On our way back the other two machines returned from Deraa with bombs, and swooped at us four times; however, they placed them badly, and we escaped nearly unhurt. Armoured car work is fighting de luxe, but they give a sitting shot to a well-handled plane. All the rest of the day at Umtaiye we were much bothered by enemy aircraft.

That night (the 19th) an armoured car, with the Egyptian and Ghurka units, went down to the railway about kilo. 154 and blew up some culverts and many rails. The object was to hinder the repair parties which (with escort of guns, machine-guns, and infantry) were hard at work on our destroyed bridge of the 16th at kilo. 149. We were also able to engage the repair train (by armoured car and Ford) at eighty yards range, and persuade it back to Mafrak at top speed. Next day I went on to Azrak, thence by air to Ramleh, and returned on the 22nd to Urn el-Surab, with three Bristol Fighters. Before these finished breakfast they had been up twice, bagged a Turkish two-seater, and driven down three scouts. After this the Turks troubled our air no more; and after breakfast I went again to Azrak, and returned to Urn el-Surab in the evening with Feisal and Nuri Shaalan, to meet the Handley-Page. It turned the scale in our favour through all the Hauran.

Next day the regulars went down to bridge kilo. 149, as its repair was nearly finished, and after a sharp fight drove off its guards, including very persistent German machine-gunners, destroyed more of the line, and burned the timber framing which the Turks had erected in seven days' work. The armoured cars and French guns did specially well today, and the Rualla horse under Nuri Shaalan personally. Nuri is quiet, and retiring, but a man of few words and great deeds, intelligent, well-informed, decisive, full of quiet humour, and the best Arab sheikh I have ever met. His tribe are like wax in his hands, and he knows what should be done and does it. The British forces had now (24 September) advanced to such a point that the Turkish Fourth Army, whom we had arrogated to ourselves as our birds, were ordered back to cover Deraa and Damascus. As a result of their haste and our holding of the railway, they abandoned the idea of falling back from Amman by rail, and proceeded towards us by road with all their guns and transport. We sent our cavalry at them, and forced them to leave the guns and carts between Mafrak and Nasib. They also lost a lot of men, and what had been a formal column of route became a confused mass of fugitives, who never had time to reform again. It seemed to us, however, that we might now venture to put ourselves between Deraa and Damascus (at some such point as Sheikh Saad) so as to force the immediate evacuation of the former: we might then hope to be able to do business, not only with this mob of the Fourth Army as it emerged from Deraa, but with such remnants of the Palestine Army as escaped by Semakh and Irbid. Accordingly, the camelry, guns, and machine-guns, marched northward on the 25th, till, on the afternoon of the 26th, they were able to descend on the railway and cross it between Ghazale and Ezra.

This move took the Turks (by now panic-stricken) completely by surprise. The railway had been opened for traffic (after our damage of the 17th) on the previous day, but we now cut it again – and it remained cut till the close of operations, and penned into Deraa six complete trains, which are now ours – took Ghazale with its two hundred men and two guns, took Ezra, held only by the Algerian, Abd el-Kader, a pro-Turk religious fanatic, and a good deal of stores. We then passed on and slept near Sheikh Miskin. The Turks received fantastic reports of our strength, and ordered the immediate evacuation of Deraa by road, while the Germans burnt their five remaining aeroplanes. This gave us a total of eleven enemy machines accounted for by our force since 13 September.

At dawn on the 27th we reached Sheikh Saad, in time to take prisoner two Austro-Turk machine-gun companies on their way to Kuneitra to oppose the British advancing by that road. We then stood on the hill at Sheikh Saad, and watched the country-side. When we saw a small enemy column we went out and took it: when we saw a large column, we lay low. Our excuse must be physical exhaustion – also we were only nine hundred strong.

Aeroplanes now dropped us a message that there were two columns of Turks advancing on us. One from Deraa was six thousand strong, and one from Mezerib, two thousand strong. We determined that the second was about our size, and marched the regulars out to meet it just north of Tafas, while sending our Hauran horse out to hang on to the skirts of the large column, and some unmounted peasants to secure the Tel el-Shehab bridge, which the Turks were mining. We were too late (since on the way we had a profitable affair with an infantry battalion) to prevent the Mezerib column getting into Tafas. They strengthened themselves there, and as at Turaa, the last village they had entered, allowed themselves to rape all the women they could catch. We attacked them with all arms as they marched out later, and bent the head of their column back towards Tell Arar. When Sherif Bey, the Turkish commander of the lancer rearguard in the village, saw this he ordered that the inhabitants be killed. These included some twenty small children (killed with lances and rifles), and about forty women. I noticed particularly one pregnant woman, who had been forced down on a saw-bayonet. Unfortunately, Talal, the sheikh of Tafas, who, as mentioned, had been a tower of strength to us from the beginning, and who was one of the coolest and boldest horsemen I have ever met, was in front with Auda abu Tayi and myself when we saw these sights. He gave a horrible cry, wrapped his headcloth about his face, put spurs to his horse, and, rocking in the saddle, galloped at full speed into the midst of the retiring column, and fell, himself and his mare, riddled with machine-gun bullets, among their lance points.

With Auda's help we were able to cut the enemy column into three. The third section, with German machine-gunners resisted magnificently, and got off, not cheaply, with Jemal Pasha in his car in their midst. The second and leading portions after a bitter struggle, we wiped out completely. We ordered 'no prisoners' and the men obeyed, except that the reserve company took two hundred and fifty men (including many German ASC) alive. Later, however, they found one of our men with a fractured thigh who had been afterwards pinned to the ground by two mortal thrusts with German bayonets. Then we turned our Hotchkiss on the prisoners and made an end of them, they saying nothing. The common delusion that the Turk is a clean and merciful fighter led some of the British troops to criticise Arab methods a little later – but they had not entered Turaa or Tafas, or watched the Turks swing their wounded by the hands and feet into a burning railway truck, as had been the lot of the Arab army at Jerdun. As for the villagers, they and their ancestors have been for five hundred years ground down by the tyranny of these Turks.

Our Rualla horse were then sent on straight to Deraa, with orders to scatter any Turkish formations met with on the road, and to occupy the place. They had two or three fights on their way down, and took Deraa station at a whirlwind gallop, riding over all the trenches, and blotting out the enemy elements that still tried to hold the place. Next morning they brought us three hundred mule mounted infantry prisoners, and about two hundred infantrymen and two guns. The Turks and Germans had unfortunately burnt their stores before we took it.

The regular troops spent that night – a very uneasy night it was – at Sheikh Saad. We did not yet know that we had won, since there was always a risk of our being washed away by a great wave of the enemy in retreat. I went out to see our Haurani horse, near Sheikh Miskin, where they were tenaciously clinging on to the great Turkish column from Deraa, giving much more than they were getting. At midnight I was back in Sheikh Saad, and found Nasir and Nuri just off for Deraa: we had a race, in which my camel corps beat the headquarters horses and joined Trad Shaalan in Deraa village at dawn. We had some little work to do then in making the necessary local arrangements.

Afterwards I rode out westwards till I met the outposts of the Fourth Division (British) and guided them into Deraa. They only stayed there one night and early on the 29th they left for Damascus, after assigning to us the duty of right-flank guard. Accordingly, we marched up the Hejaz line, which suited us very well, for first our three hundred Rualla and Abu Tayi horse, and then our nine hundred Rualla camels, caught up with our Hauran cavalry harassing the Turkish Deraa column near Mesmiye.

The aeroplanes had reported this column as six thousand strong. At Sheikh Miskin on the second day it looked about five thousand strong. At Mesmiye it was said to be three thousand strong, and at Kiswe, where our horse headed them into General Gregory's Brigade, there were about two thousand of them. The whole of this gradual attrition was the work of the irregulars, since the Arab Regular Army, not being skilled camel-men, marched little faster than the British cavalry, and never came into action after Deraa. The Kiswe fight was a satisfactory affair. The Turks came along the valley of the Hejaz line, in a long, straggling column, halting every few miles to bring their guns into action against the Arabs. Nasir knew that the leading brigade of the Fourth Division was nearing Khan Denun, so he galloped forward with his slaves, and Nuri Shaalan and his slaves, about thirty in all, headed the Turkish column off between Jebel Mania and the trees of Khiata, and threw himself into the trees to delay them till the British were ready. The British had not seen or heard of this enemy column, and were in order of march, but as soon as they had learned what was forward they got their cavalry to north, west, and south of them, and opened on them with their Horse Artillery. It was just sunset when the affair began, but before it was too dark to see, the Turks were a scattered mob, running up the steep slopes of Mania and over it, in their ignorance that the Wuld Ali and Abu Tayi were waiting for them there in force. This ended the history of the Fourth Army. Old Auda, tired of slaughter, took the last six hundred prisoners. In all we had killed nearly five thousand of them, captured about eight thousand (as we took them we stripped them, and sent them to the nearest village, where they will be put to work on the land till further notice) and counted spoils of about one hundred and fifty machine-guns and from twenty-five to thirty guns.

Our horse rode on that evening (30 September) into Damascus, where the burning ammunition dumps turned night into day. Away back at Kiswe the glare was painful, and the roar and reverberation of the explosions kept us all awake. In Damascus, Shukri el-Ayubi and the town council had proclaimed the King of the Arabs and hoisted the Arab flag as soon as Mustafa Kemal and Jemal had gone. The Turk and German morale was so low that they had marched out beneath the Arab flag without protest: and so good was the civil control that little or no looting took place.

Nasir, old Nuri, Major Stirling and myself, entered the morning of 1 October, receiving a tremendous but impromptu greeting from the Moslems of the town.

I think I should put on record a word of what happened after we got in. I found at the town hall Mohammed Said and Abd el-Kadir, the Algerians, who had just assumed possession of the provisional civil government, since there was no one in Damascus who could fight their Moorish bodyguard. They are both insane, and as well pro-Turkish and religious fanatics of the most unpleasant sort. In consequence I sent for them, and before the belediyeh and the shiyukh el-harrat, announced that, as Feisal's representative, I declared Shukri el-Ayubi Arab military governor (Ali Riza, the intended governor, was missing), and the provisional civil administration of the Algerians dissolved. They took it rather hard, and had to be sent home. That evening Abd el-Kadir called together his friends and some leading Druses, and made them an impassioned speech, denouncing the Sherif as a British puppet, and calling on them to strike a blow for the Faith in Damascus. By morning this had degenerated into pure looting, and we called out the Arab troops, put Hotchkiss round the central square, and imposed peace in three hours, after inflicting about twenty casualties.

The part played by the Druses was an ignoble one. We had never expected them to join the Sherif, and had therefore excluded them from our calculations of war-wages. After the British victory in Palestine they began to believe that perhaps they were on the wrong side: so when we came forward the second time to Deraa they all collected round Sultan el-Atrash and Husein abu Naif, our two firm friends in Jebel Druse, clamouring for military service. Sultan believed them, and marched to Ghazale to join us with about one thousand five hundred of them, all mounted. They hung round behind our horse, never entering the fight, and waited till Damascus was taken. They then paraded before the Sherif, and began to loot the inhabitants. After the Arabs checked them at this and drove them out of the town to Jaraman, they came to me, and said that their real feelings were pro-British. As they were the only people in all Syria to volunteer for service against Egypt in 1914, this was hard to credit, and I gave them little satisfaction. They are greedy braggarts who soon knock under to a show of force.
TEL

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117. *Note by Wilson*[1] (8 December 1918)

Alleged Large Traffic in British Rifles and Ammunition from Hedjaz to Nejd

[. . .] When in Cairo recently en route to England Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence, C.B., D.S.O., informed me that he had a short interview with Bassam in the course of which I understood the latter definitely told him that Ibn Saud had received rifles (and presumably ammunition) from the Turkish Government at Damascus at various times, even as recently as during the present year. [. . .]

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118. *Notes on Camel-Journeys*[2] (24 May 1919)

I have been several times lately asked for figures of camel-journeys, both for speed and for endurance, and no doubt therefore the following notes on the subject will be of interest. In all cases she-camels only are concerned.

For speed, the best performance I know was the 39 hours' ride of Sherif Barakat ibn Smeiyah, from Medina to Mecca, by the Rabegh road a few years ago. It was a race, and camels were changed at Rabegh, 154 miles from Medina. The total distance works out at about 280 miles, and it was covered practically without a stop, except for a few minutes at Rabegh. The average speed was thus over seven miles per hour. A race of this sort is a test of the man's endurance, rather than that of the camel. Another equally fine ride was that of Aissa, a Harb tribesman, who came from Zilfi in Qasim to Yenbo in three days, and returned to Zilfi in four more, making a total of seven days for the round trip of 900 miles, an average of 130 miles a day. Aissa used four camels.

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[1] From Colonel Wilson to the Arab Bureau, typewritten, dated '8.12.18' and signed. Received by the Arab Bureau, date '17.12.18'. Record no. FO 882/14 MIS/18/4

[2] Published in *Arab Bulletin*, no. 111, 24 May 1918.

Rides on single camels are more interesting as records. One of the Atram family of Fitenna Abu Tayi Howeitat, on a home-bred pedigree camel, rode between sunset and sunset from Nebk abu Gasr to Bair and Jefer, a distance of 143 miles. He rested in Jefer one day and returned on the third day to Nebk on the same camel. I owned this camel some years later, and found by experience that it would keep up a comfortable and steady trot of seven and a half miles per hour for hour after hour without special urging: but I never had need to do a trotting journey of greater length than from Rum to Akaba (39 miles) on it. It did this in a little under five hours, carrying a good deal of kit besides myself. Mesnid, a Sherari, took a message from Jefer to Akaba for me. He left Jefer at noon, and returned with the reply two days later at noon, doing 220 miles, and his errand also, in the 48 hours. He rode a Sherari four-year-old.

The fast time for a camel-postman from Medina to Mecca is three days. This is an average of about 95 miles a day.

With one servant I rode from Azrak through Jefer, Shedia, and Rum to Akaba (290 miles) in three days and a half. This is an average of about 84 miles a day. We rode Beni Sakhr camels.

One of the Harith Sherifs of Modhig rode from Akaba to Mecca in nine days. The total distance is about 690 miles, which gives him an average of 77 miles a day. He rode a Sherari camel, and the trip is one of the finest I have heard of.

Exceptional performances of this sort cannot be expected of the ordinary camel in ordinary condition. When riding ghazzu with the Howeitat or Beni Sakhr I found that for long journeys camels were never permitted to trot, since it interrupts the chances of grazing on the march. They do a steady walk of nearly four miles an hour, and keep this up for from sixteen to twenty hours daily, giving them an average mileage of from 64 to 80 miles. The smaller of these distances can be counted on as an average for perhaps ten or twelve days. For a month's riding day by day, it would be unwise to expect more than 50 miles a day from a camel in good condition. Weak camels cannot be expected to do more than about 40 miles a day average. With strong camels my experience has been that the man gives in sooner than the camel. My longest month was 1,400 miles, and I found it very difficult. A bad or inexperienced rider will wear out a camel very quickly. Arabs mostly ride light, about eight or nine stone, and their clothes and kit are usually less than we can do with. I carried little, and yet managed to use twice as many camels as my men.

For a disciplined camel corps, forty miles a day is a fair march, and that this average was passed for three days on end by Colonel Buxton's column of ICC when going north from Bair speaks very well for the riders and the animals. The latter (and indeed the former) were all male, were all unaccustomed to desert conditions, and were carrying heavy loads. A column marching in the Arab formation of small independent groups of ten or twelve will make better way than a column that tries to keep in regular line. An Arab party of 20 men (my servants) marched once with all their kit from Abu el Lissan to Akaba (60 miles) in just over five hours, as the last stage of a journey of five 50-mile marches. The camels were all fit to start the next day. Needless to say they were all pushing their camels on this last occasion. A stripped camel, racing, will do something like twenty miles an hour for nearly two hours. For a short burst I have timed them trotting at 22 and cantering at 26 miles per hour. TEL[1]

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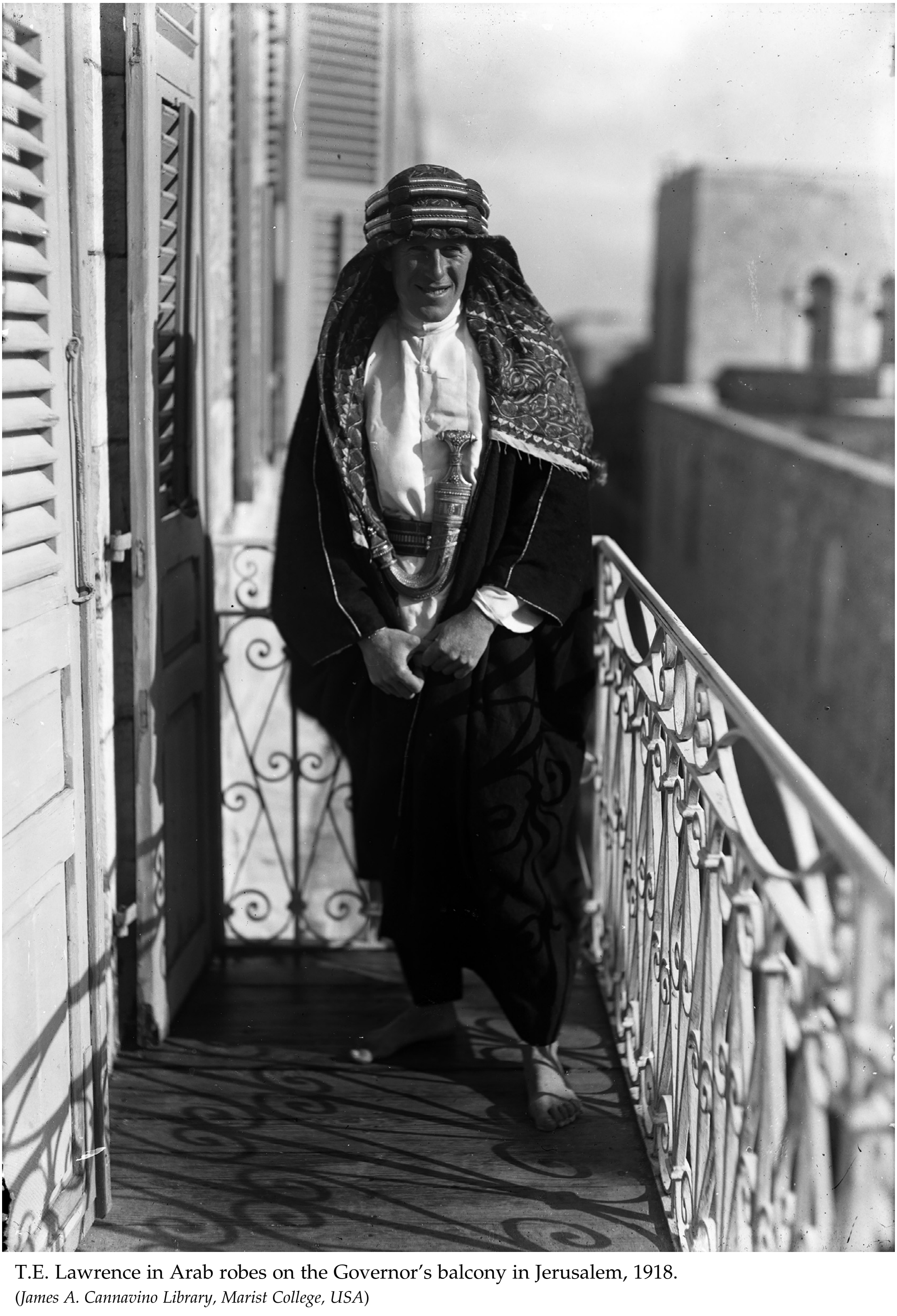
[1] In the *Arab Bulletin*, Lawrence's text was followed by this comment from Garland: 'The performances described by Colonel Lawrence are exceptional ones made on the best camels. During my experience in the southern Hejaz I found that either the incentive had to be very strong, or the remuneration most lavish, to induce a Bedou to cover more than 30 or 40 miles a day. The fastest rate for the emir's neggabs from Mecca to the Arab camps on the outskirts of Medina, and from the camps to the coast at Yenbo, was 50 miles a day, but the payment worked out at £2 10S. per diem. On raids, the rate of progress was generally 15 miles a day and never more than 25. This was done at walking pace and the Bedouin intensely disliked travelling more than eight hours out of the twenty-four, or more than three hours without rest. It was my experience that for endurance in camel riding though not for speed the Britisher could easily outstrip the Bedou, and during my different journeys my Arab companions were, in every case, the first to suggest halting for rest. The camels of the southern Hejaz are, in general, poor beasts, and ten hours' continuous marching as a rule exhausts them. I have known several cases where the mounts of postmen, after doing a trip from Yenbo to the emirs' camps and back (about 200 miles) in 5 days, have simply dropped dead at the end of the journey. Baggage caravans march at the rate of about two miles an hour only, and to accompany such a caravan is probably the most tiring and uncomfortable form of travelling that exists. The camels are tied together in a long string and usually travel during the night only. A march generally extends to 10 or 12 hours. Except for the man on the leading camel, the Arabs arrange comfortable places on which to lie down on top of the camel loads and sleep the whole night.' The addition was signed, evidently due to a clear misprint, 'G. Harland'.

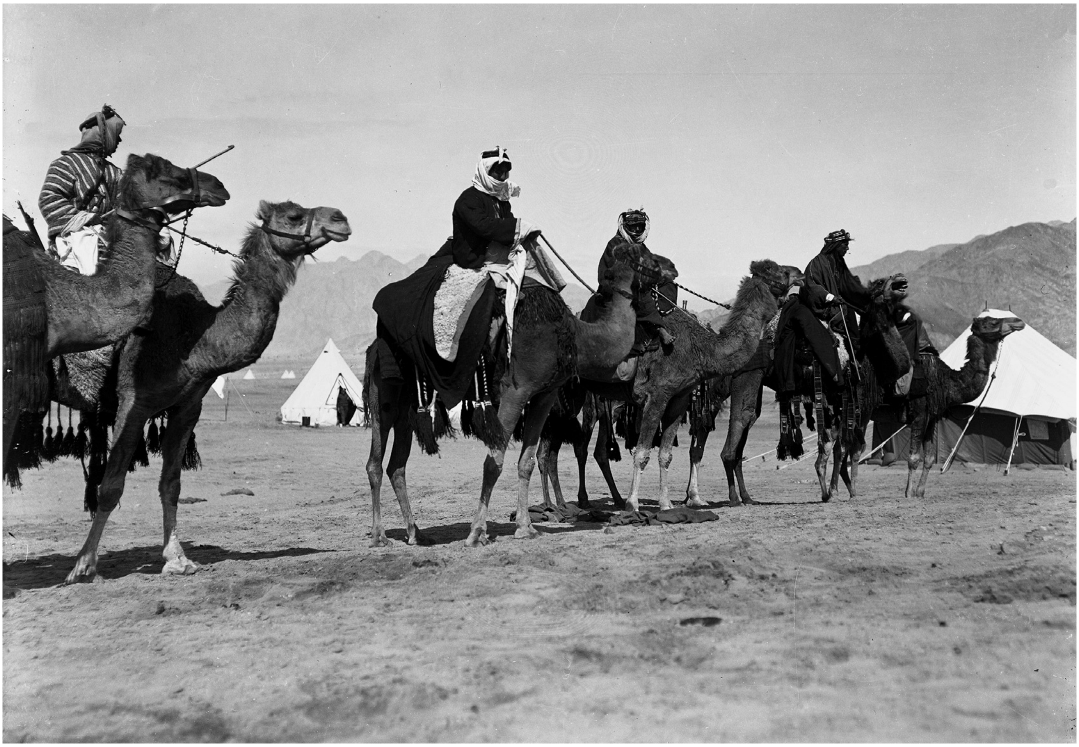


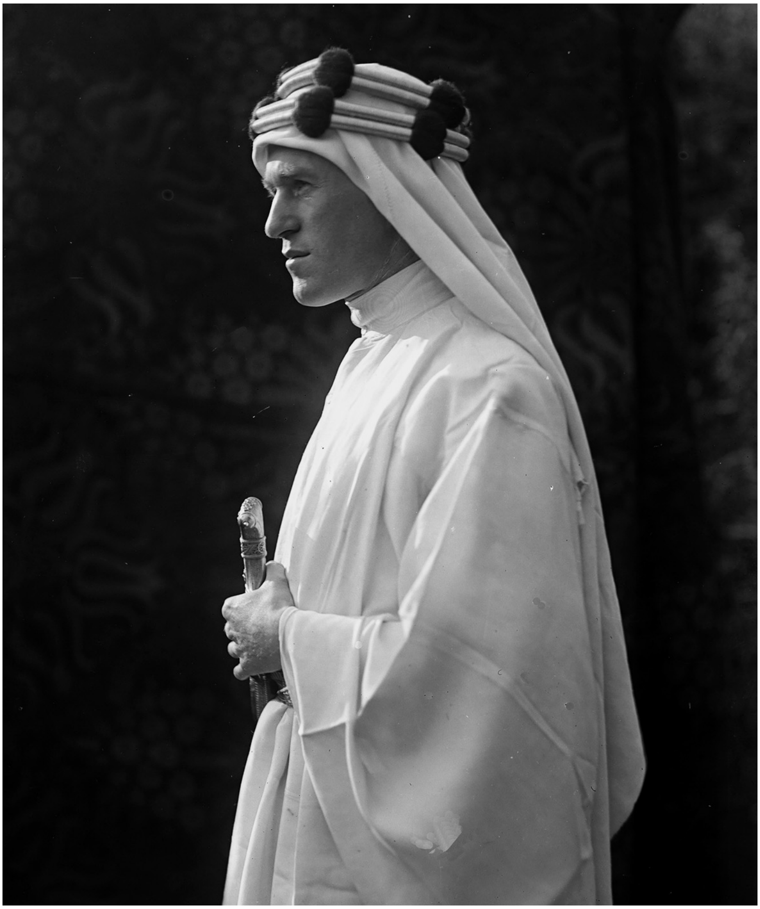
T.E. Lawrence in Arab robes on the Governor’s balcony in Jerusalem, 1918.

(*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

Lawrence standing on a prayer rug in front of his headquarters tent, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

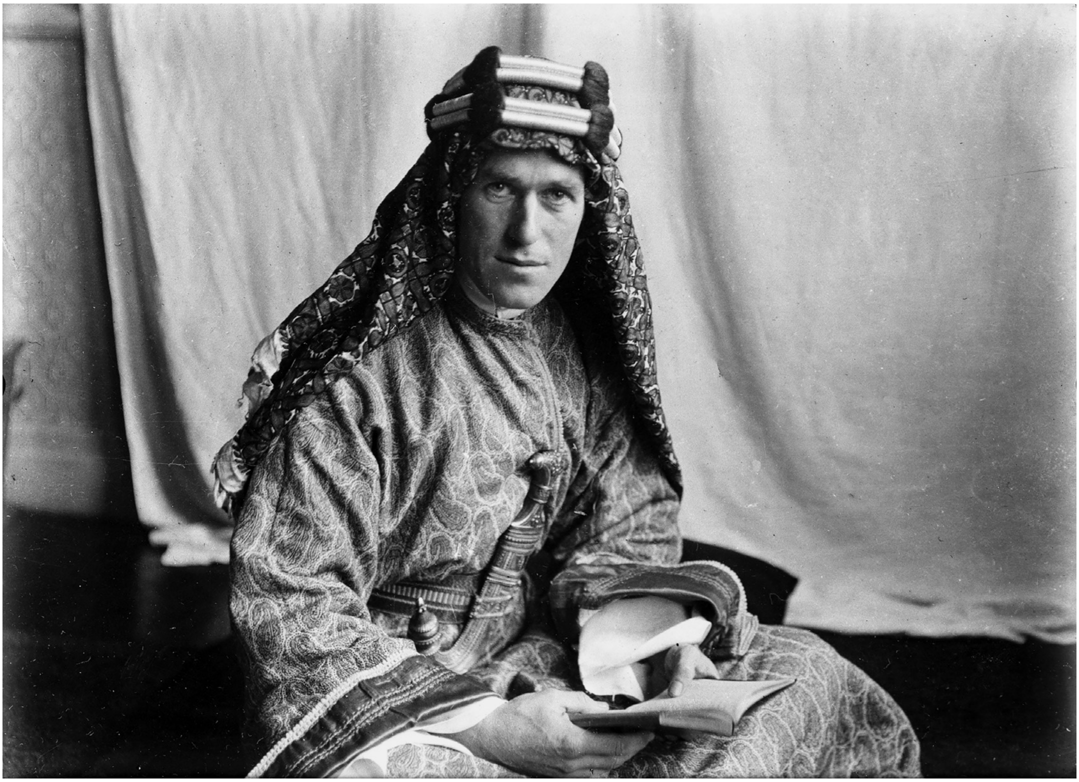
Lawrence and D.G. Hogarth at the Arab Bureau in Cairo, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)





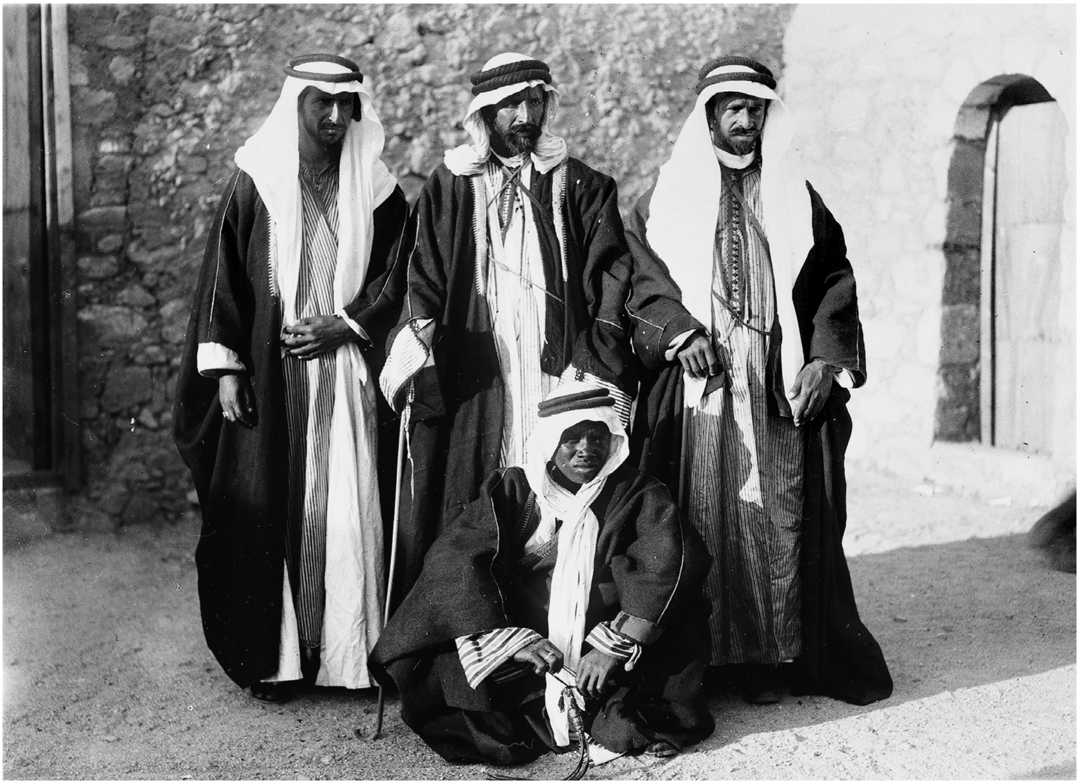
Lawrence and his bodyguard in the desert, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

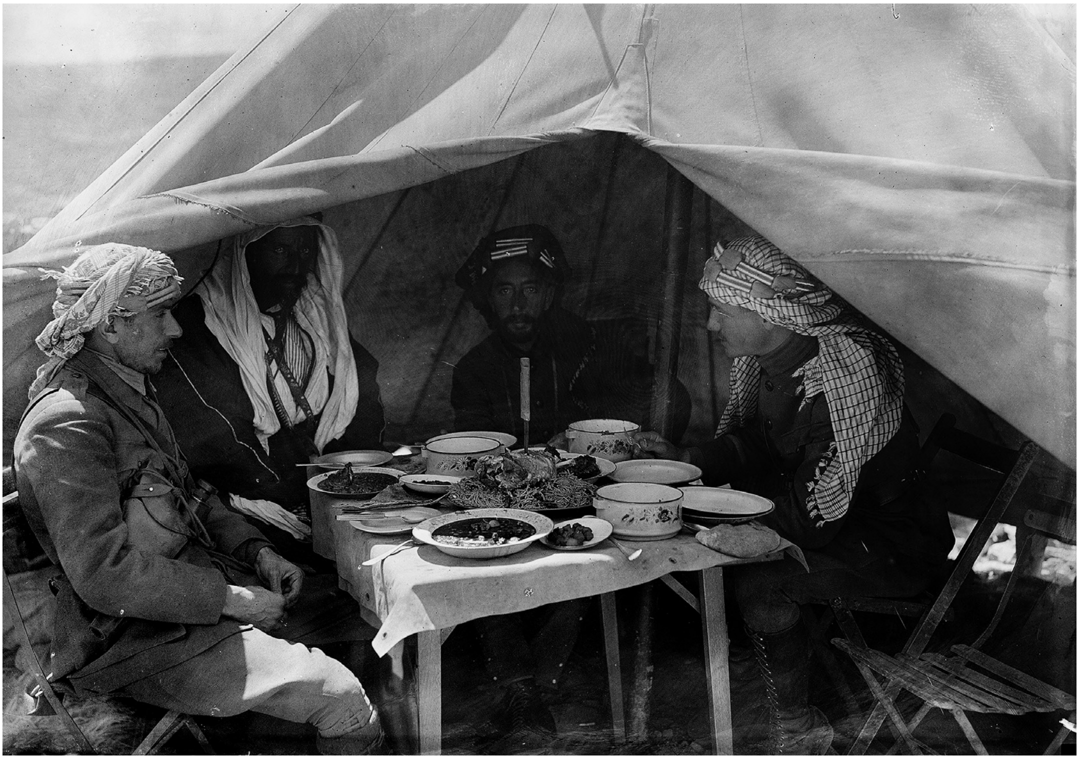
Lawrence in white robes, left hand on dagger, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)



Lawrence in paisley robes, holding a book, ca.1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

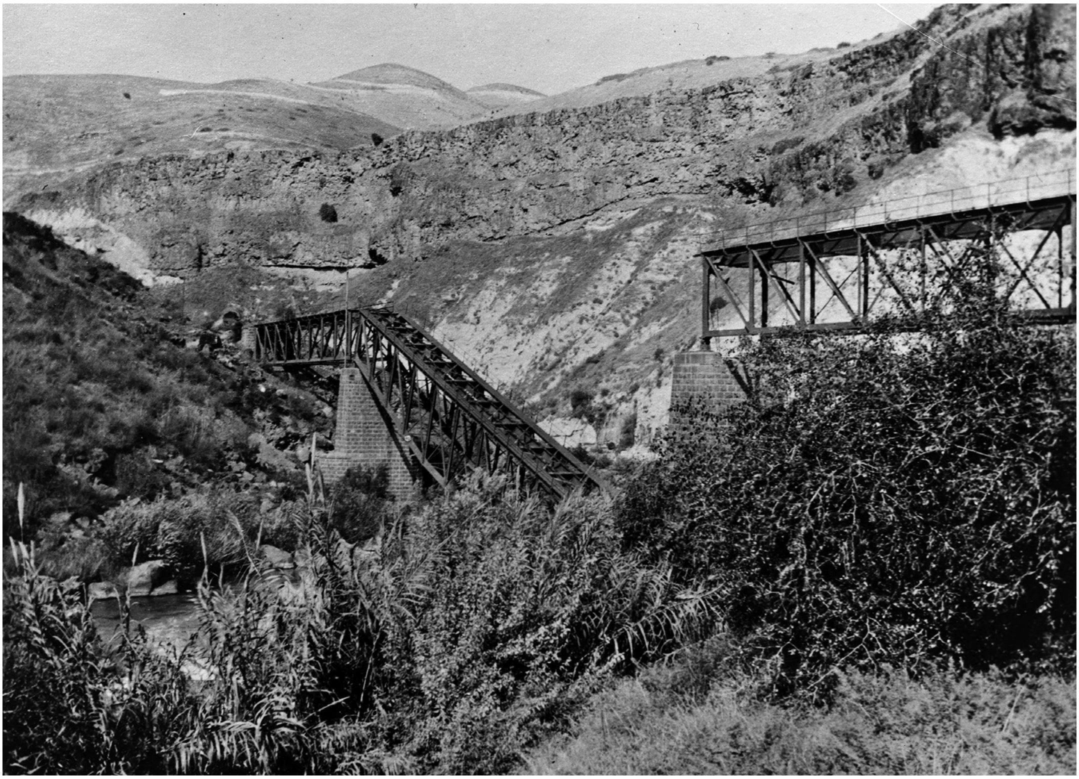
Auda Abu Tayi, centre, and his two brothers, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

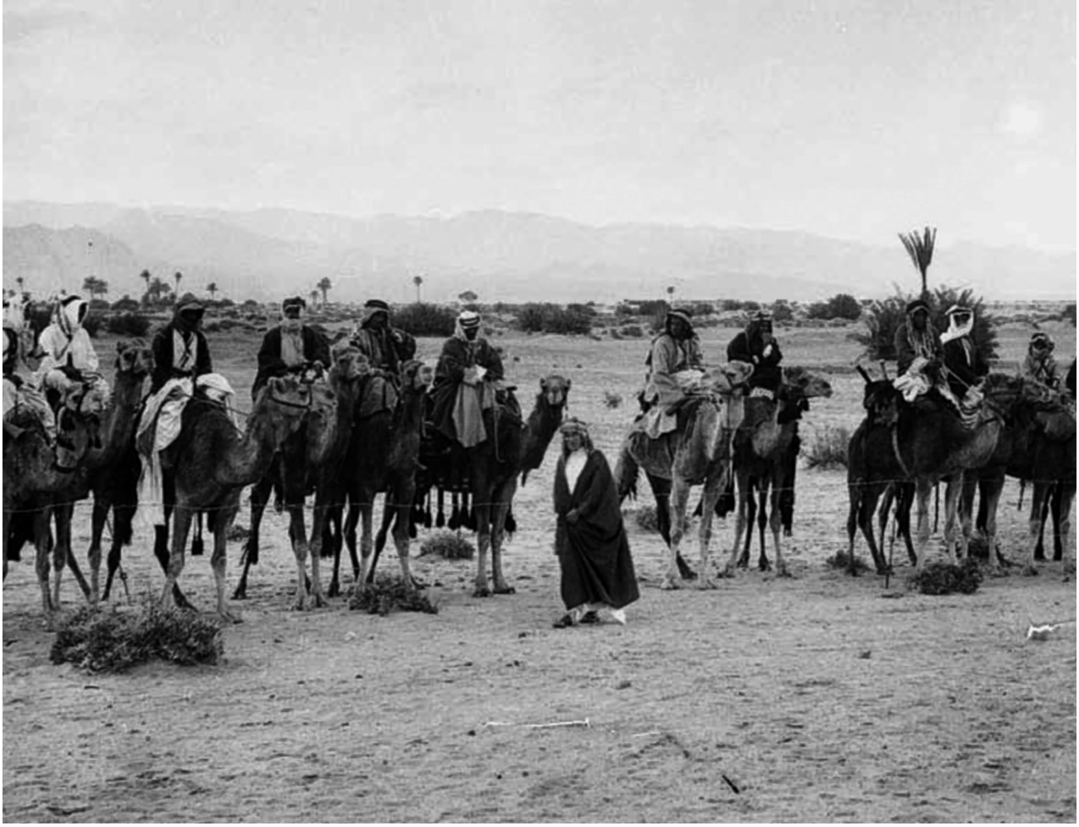




Dinner party, left to right: Nuri Pasha, Auda Abu Tayi, Emir Feisal and Lowell Thomas, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

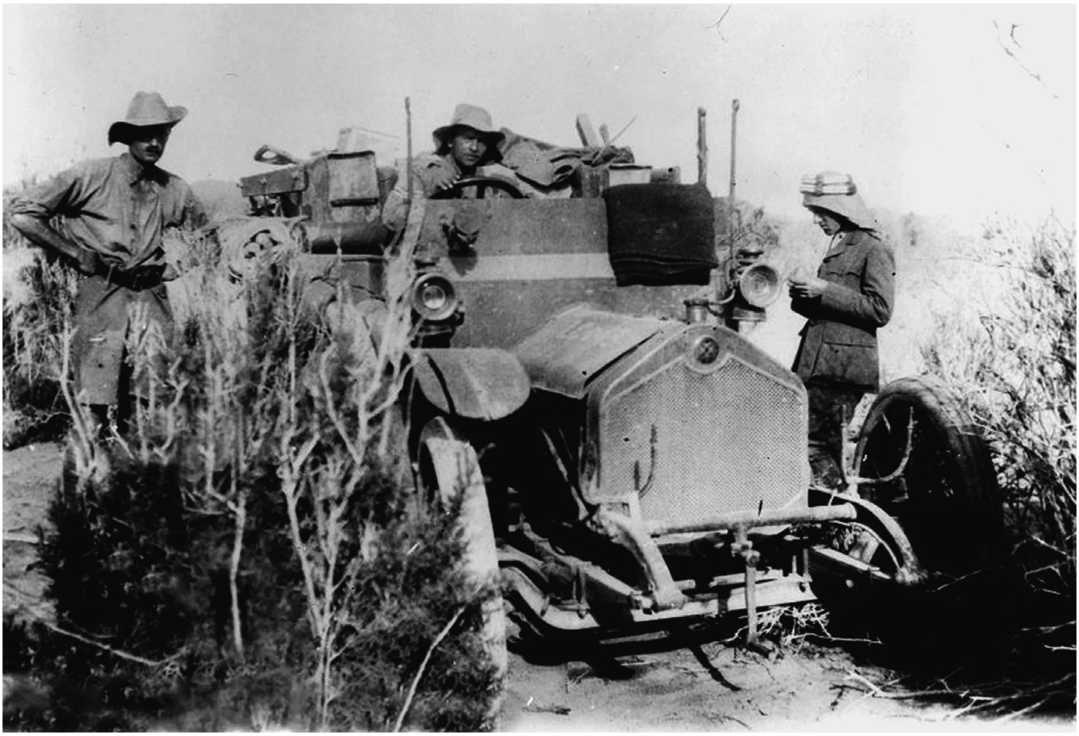
Dynamited steel bridge on the Hejaz Railway, 1918. (*James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, USA*)

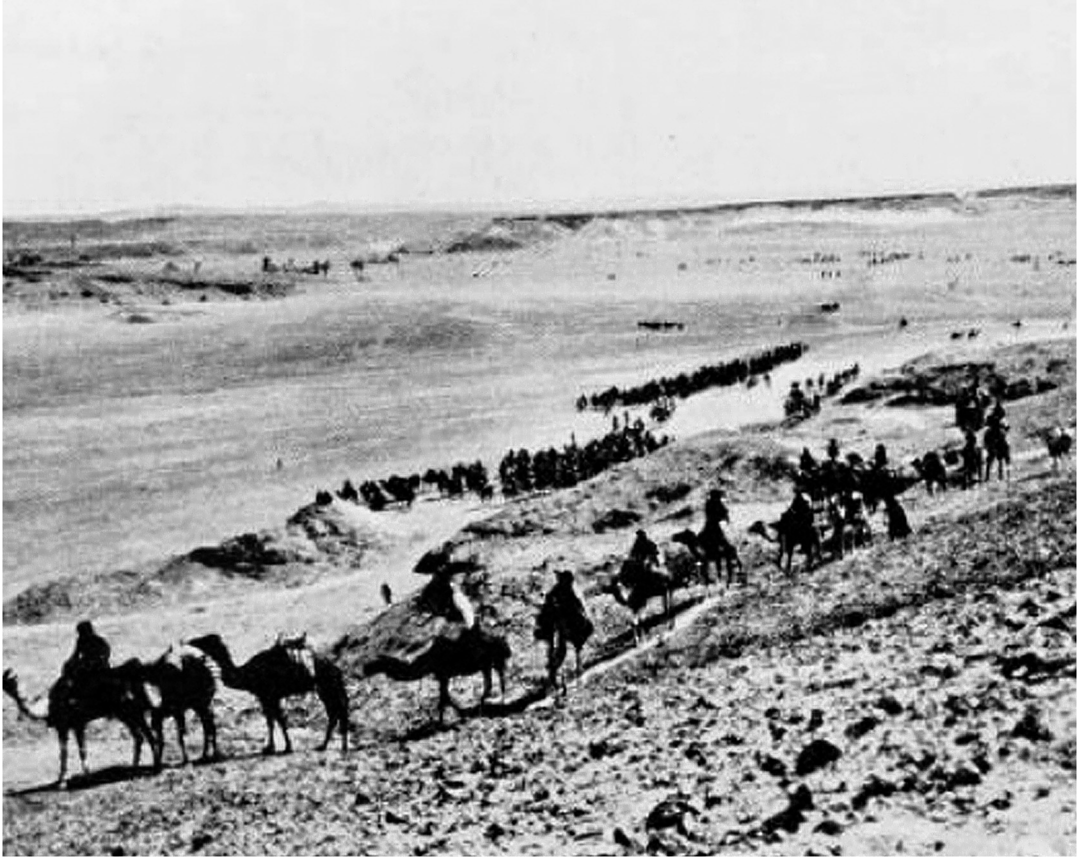




Lawrence and bodyguard at Aqaba, 1918.

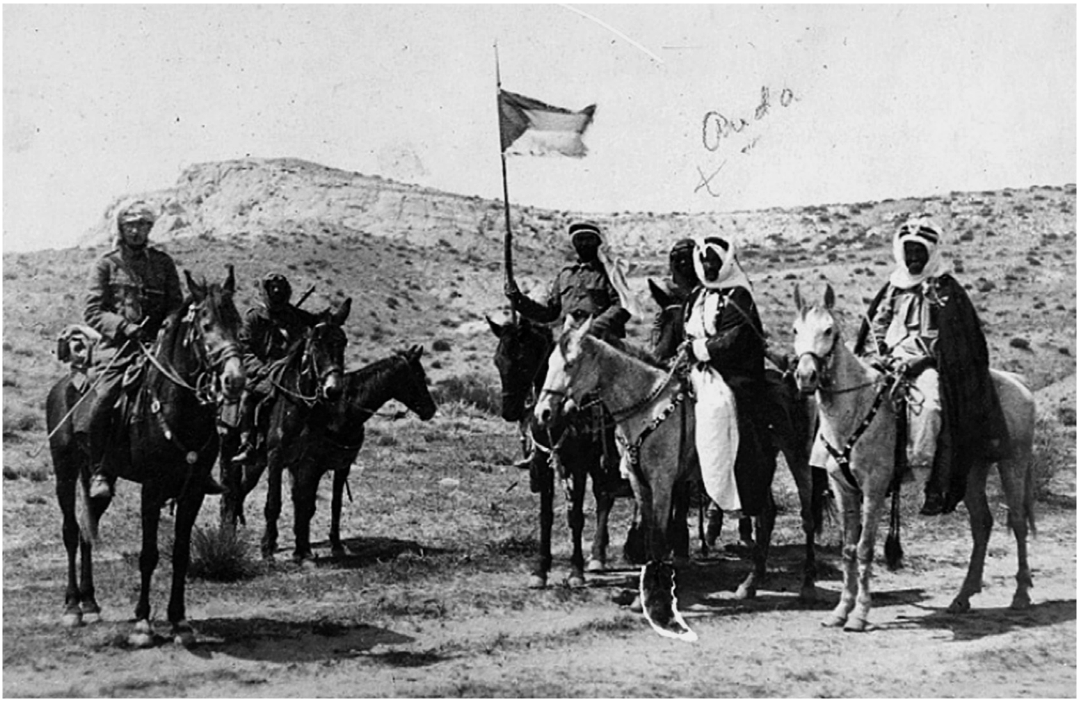
Lawrence (right) with Lieutenant W.G. Stafford in the Wadi Hamdh, 1918. (© *2013, Roger Bragger*)





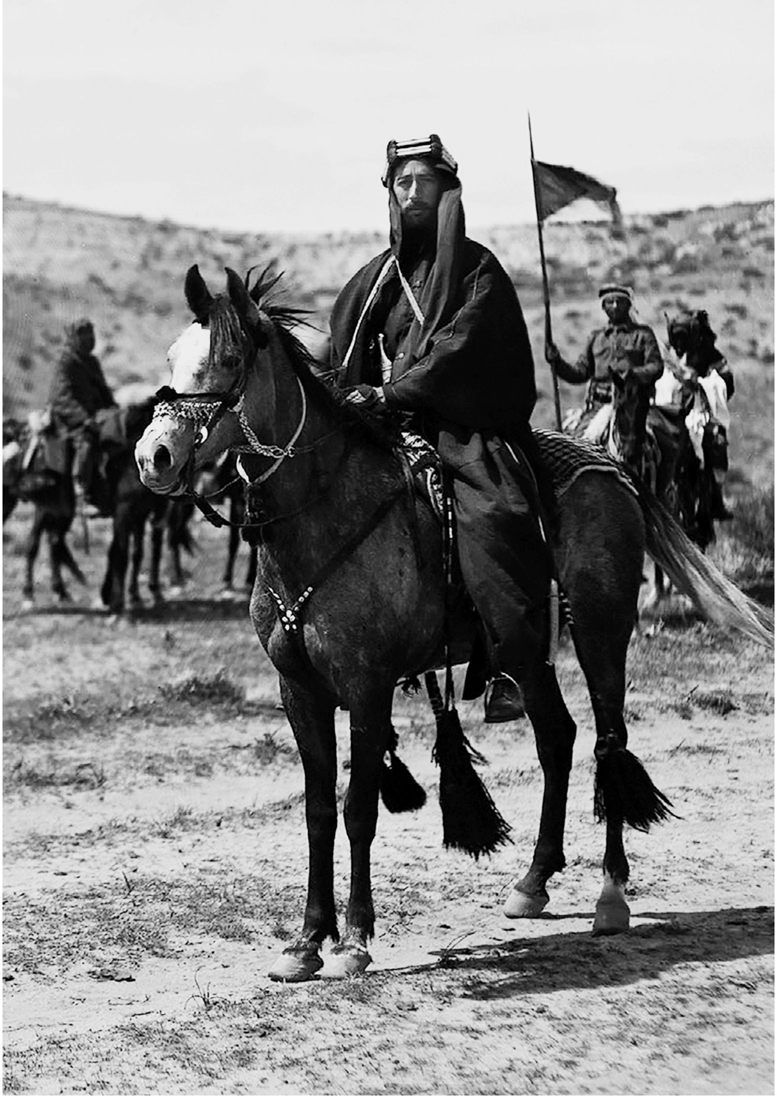
Feisal's army coming into Wejh, January 1917. (*Naval Intelligence Division*)

Auda Abu Tayi (second from right) with the Arab Revolt's flag, 1917. (*Editor's collection*)



My first
photo in
Hijaz
TES.

‘My first photo in Hijaz’ by T.E.L., 1916. (*Editor’s collection*)



Feisal ibn al-Hussein, 1918. (*Editor’s collection*)

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